

The Unicorn and the Dancing Girl

Poems of Faiz Ahmed Faiz
with original text

Mir Zaheer Abass Rustmani



Translated by **DAUD KAMAL**

Selected & Edited by **KHALID HASAN**

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

پیش نظر کتاب ہمارے واٹس ایپ گروپ کے سکارلز کی طلب پہ
سافٹ میں تبدیل کی گئی ہے۔ مصنف کتاب کے لیے نیک خواہشات
کے ساتھ سافٹ بنانے والوں کے حق میں دعائے خیر کی استدعا ہے۔

زیر نظر کتاب فیس بک گروپ ”کتب حنہ“ میں بھی اپلوڈ کر دی گئی ہے۔
گروپ کالک ملاحظہ کیجیے :

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1144796425720955/?ref=share>



میر ظہیر عباس روستمانی

03072128068



Faiz is in the direct classical tradition of Ghalib and Iqbal and takes his place in that distinguished pantheon, an equal among equals with a style and presence distinctly his own. His greatness lay in his ability to write on contemporary issues and the human predicament in an idiom which always retained the high sobriety of classicism. His diction, his imagery and symbolism remained unmistakably traditional, but unlike others who tried the same formula, Faiz produced poetry which could be directly and immediately related to the concerns of today in a language full of vitality and power.

It is hoped that this compilation of translations of his poetry (along with the Urdu text and transliteration in Devanagari) will convey to the reader something of the genius of a man who was larger than life, whose fame spread far beyond the land of his birth and whose work has been translated in many languages of the world.

£7.95

SOMA
28 KENNINGTON LANE
LONDON SE11 4LS
TELEPHONE: 071 726 2181

The Unicorn and the Dancing Girl

Poems of Faiz Ahmed Faiz
with original text

Translated by
DAUD KAMAL

Selected & Edited by
KHALID HASAN



Independent Publishing Company Ltd.
38 Kennington Lane
London SE11 4LS

Independent Publishing Company Ltd.
38 Kennington Lane
London SE11 4LS

پیش خدمت ہے کتب خانہ گروپ کی طرف سے
ایک اور کتاب۔
پیش نظر کتاب فیس بک گروپ کتب خانہ میں
بھی اپلوڈ کر دی گئی ہے

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1144796425720955/?ref=share>
میر ظہیر عباس دوستمانی
0307-2128068

@Stranger        

First published 1988

© Khalid Hasan, 1988

ISBN 0 86144 951 7

Printed in India by Allied Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi

Acknowledgement

I wish to place on record my debt to Seyyid Faizi in Vienna without whose devotion, encouragement and guidance, it would have been difficult to complete this labour of love.

—Khalid Hasan

Publisher's Note

We deeply mourn the tragic passing away of Daud Kamal in New York in November 1987, while this book was under production.

We also take this opportunity to acknowledge the help and cooperation received from Mr. Shabi Ahmad of New Delhi in arranging the Urdu text and reading through the proofs of the Devanagari transliteration.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz on Daud Kamal

"Daud Kamal, a considerable poet in his own right, has now generously addressed his talents to the much demanded and long neglected task of translating selections from Urdu poetry into English verse. Translating poetry, even when confined to a cognate language with some formal and idiomatic affinities with the original compositions, is an exacting task, but this task is obviously far more formidable when the languages involved are far removed from each other in cultural background, rhythmic and formal patterns, and the vocabulary of symbol and allusion as Urdu and English.

Daud Kamal has successfully braved these problems by concentrating on imaginative and interpretative rather than literal rendering of his selected poems and thus adding to them an effective poetic dimension of his own creativity."

— Faiz Ahmed Faiz

Lahore
October 1984

Contents

Faiz—A Summing Up (Khalid Hasan)	xi
Faiz on His Boyhood and Youth	xxi
Faiz—A Personal Memoir (Khalid Hasan)	xxix
Faiz on Faiz	1
A Conversation with Faiz	liii

POEMS

The Unicorn and the Dancing Girl	
(an English original by Faiz)	1
Attic (an English original by Daud Kamal)	6
Ascent (an English original by Daud Kamal)	7
Do Not Grieve	8
Paris	10
The Gamble of Love	12
Evening, Be Kind	14
Wash the Blood	18
What Should We Do	20
Nimbus	24
The Curve of Memory	28
Elysium	30
Day And Night	32
Captivity	34
The Morning of Freedom	36
The Last Letter	38
This is the Moment to Mourn Time	40
Remembrance	44

A Nocturnal Rhapsody	46
What Will Be, Will Be	48
You Think ...	50
The Flowers Have All Withered	52
A Lover to his Beloved	54
The Moment of Ultimate Betrayal	56
The Leningrad Cemetery	58
Why Pray For Eternal Life?	60
When in Your Sea Eyes	62
A Prison Evening	64
A Few Days More	66
The Hurricane of Remorse	68
A Letter From Prison	70
We, The Poets	74
Lullaby for A Palestinian Child	76
Stay With Me	78
Loneliness	80
Speak ...	82
Three Voices	84
The Massacre of Beirut	88
For the Palestinian Martyrs	90
Do Not Ask	92
Scene	94
Return From Dhaka	96
Travelogue	98
Song	102
Visitors	104
The Rain of Stones	106
Supplication	108

Dogs

110

Love's Captives (trans. by Faiz)

112

कलाम-ए-फैज़

गुम न कर, गुम न कर	9
पेरिस	11
दोनों जहान तेरी मुहब्बत में हार के	13
ए शाम मेहरबाँ हो	15
पाँव से लहू को धो डालो	19
क्या करें	21
दरबार में अब सतवते-शाही की अलामत	25
अशार	29
रात दी रात (पंजाबी)	31
दिन और रात	33
मता-ए-लौह-ओ कलम	35
सुबह-ए-आजादी अगस्त १९४७	37
आखिरी छत	39
ये मातम-ए-वक्त की घड़ी है	41
याद	45
सरोदे-शबाना	47
तुम अपनी करनी कर गुज़रो	49
सितम सिखलायेगा रस्म-ए-वफा	51
फूल मुरझा गए सारे	53
कोई आशिक किसी महबूबा से	55
कहाँ जाओगे	57
लेनिनग्राड का गोरिस्तान	59
हमने सब शेर में सँवारे थे	61

जब तेरी समंदर आँखों में	63
ज़िन्दों की एक शाम	65
चन्द रोज़ और मेरी जान!	67
गुबार-ए-खातिर-ए-महफ़िल ठहर जाये	69
ज़िन्दों से एक ख़त	71
शायर लोग	75
फ़लस्तीनी बच्चे के लिए लोरी	77
पास रहो	79
तन्हाई	81
बोल	83
तीन आवाज़ें	85
एक नग़मा करबला-ए-बैरुत के लिए	89
फ़लस्तीनी शूहदा: जो परदेस में काम आए	91
मुझसे पहली-सी मुहब्बत मेरी महबूब न माँग	93
मंजर	95
ढाका से बापसी पर	97
सफ़र नामा	99
गीत	103
मेरे मिलने वाले	105
ख़त्म हुई बारिश-ए-संग	107
रब्बा सच्चिया	109
कुत्ते	111
इश्क अपने मुजरिमों को पा-ब-जैलौं ले चला	113

Faiz—A Summing Up

Khalid Hasan

Faiz died on 20 November 1984 in Lahore, a city he loved and, during his periods of self-exile, pined for. If the end had to come, then it was apt that it should have come in Lahore and not on the 'nameless byways of an unknown land', to quote a snatch from one of his poems.

How does one sum up a man who was larger than life? How does one assess a poet whose greatness was established over forty years ago, whose fame was to spread far beyond the land of his birth and whose work was to be translated in so many languages of the world?

In a country where one authoritarian government has made way for another since its independence in 1947, Faiz was to become a symbol of revolt and dissidence. His poetry, as much as his life, came to represent the longing of the people for the freedom which had come their way so briefly and then been cynically taken away.

To the forces of the left and to those who sought to build a just and exploitation-free society, Faiz became a source of great ideological power. His voice always rang high and clear and during the grave-like silence of martial law rule, his words remained a beacon of light that could not be extinguished. With him has gone the luminosity of hope. Today, as one looks around in that vast and unfortunate country of 85 millions, one fails to find a single man who could so courageously and with so much power give a voice to the voiceless. In the 1950s he wrote from prison: 'What if they have snatched away the pen and the tablet from my hands, for have I not dipped my fingers in the blood of my heart.'

Faiz was a Marxist, but what differentiated him from this often joyless and doctrinaire crowd was his profound humanism, steeped as it was in the rich tradition of the sub-continent's culture, literature and spiritual continuum. His poetry is a celebration of life and an affirmation of the law of change. He was a man singularly devoid of prejudice. He fought bigotry, not with bigotry, but with tolerance.

In literary terms, Faiz was in the direct classical tradition of Ghalib and Iqbal and takes his place in that distinguished pantheon, an equal among equals with a style and presence distinctly his own.

His greatness lay in his ability to have written of contemporary issues and the human predicament in an idiom which always retained the high sobriety of classicism. He wrote within the great literary tradition of Urdu poetry. His diction, his imagery and his symbols remained unmistakably traditional, but unlike others who tried the same formula, Faiz managed to produce poetry which could be directly and immediately related to the concerns of today.

In the hands of lesser practitioners, writing within the austere confines of tradition has resulted in soulless repetition, the invocation of a kind of literary *mantra* which has lost its power and its applicability. More bad verse has been written in the traditional mode than one would have thought possible. With Faiz the sleeping gods once again came to life. The word regained its vitality and its power. This will remain the greatest testimony to his genius.

Rejecting the art-for-art's sake approach very early in life, he identified himself with the aspirations of the common people. The miracle of his genius lay in his ability to communicate not only with them, but with the so-called 'more sophisticated' sections of society as well. His verse retained its purity and lyricism and never failed to move. He is among that handful of whom it can be said: they never wrote bad or indifferent poetry. His seven volumes of verse

stand witness to that.¹

No greater statement of Faiz's humanism can be cited than his powerful poem on the 1965 war, that senseless conflict between India and Pakistan which destroyed thousands of young lives, settled nothing and sowed a harvest of hate and suspicion which is still being reaped twenty years later.

Called 'The Soldier's Elegy', the poem is written in the lilting cadences of Hindi. A free verse translation might manage to convey some of the power and pathos of this disturbing piece of verse.²

Arise from the dust, my son
Wake up
The black night is over us
Bedecked in soft blue shawls
I have made your bed
Consecrating it with the pearls of my tears
So many pearls
That the sky is luminous with their splendour
The splendour of your name.
Arise from the dust, my son
Awake
The morning gold is over the rooftops
But black as night is my backyard
We have been waiting
Your comely bride
Your handsome brothers
Wake up
What was your kingdom
Is now a wasteland
And on the thrones of iniquity

1. *Naqsh-i-Faryadi, Dast-i-Saba, Zindan Nama, Dast-i-Teh-i-Sang, Sar-i-Wadi-i-Sina, Sham-i-Shehr-i-Yaran, Merey Dil Merey Mussafir, Nuskha-hai Wafa*, a limited collected edition of his works was published in London—and later in Lahore—in 1983.
2. Translated by Khalid Hasan.

Sit mighty tyrants
Why are you sleeping so quietly
On the dusty earth
Wake up, son
My obstinate son
Wake up.

It is evidence of Faiz's universalism that he wrote this poem at a time when the basest and most primitive jingoism seemed to have taken hold of the people of the subcontinent. As a matter of fact, Faiz was attacked at the time by poets and intellectuals turned super-patriots overnight for his silence. It was even said that his sympathies squarely lay with, what was then and has since been described as the 'Indo-Soviet lobby', an international political pressure group of whose existence both Moscow and New Delhi are unaware.

The Faiz elegy, written soon after the 17-day conflict ended to reveal the carnage and destruction of so much life and goodwill, is a classic in the sense that it takes no geographical, ideological or political sides. His elegy is for all those young soldiers who fell in the war—any war. Only someone with Faiz's humanism and detachment could have produced this poem at the height of India and Pakistan's 'scoundrel time'.

It is no wonder, therefore, that all his life, Faiz remained under attack from small-minded communalists and men blinded by religious or nationalistic bigotry. He never retaliated. His tolerance for taking personal abuse was almost saintlike.

One of the leading lights of the Progressive Writers' Movement which transformed the literary scene in India in the early 1930s, Faiz remained steadfast to his literary and political principles. In a society where success is often commensurate with the ability to compromise and kneel in supplication to the rising sun, Faiz chose to follow the lonely path of dissent. And while the high and the mighty and those who ebb and flow by the moon will be swept away into the

bin of history, Faiz and his legacy will live and continue to inspire the generations that lie unborn in the womb of time.

Faiz was born on 13 February 1911 in Sialkot, West Punjab, the second son of Sultan Mohammad Khan, who, according to one account, 'ran away as a child from the prospect of a village shepherd's life and educated himself to become a senior functionary at the court in Kabul'.

Faiz studied at the famous Murray College, Sialkot, that marvellous institution run by the Church of Scotland¹, where the poet Iqbal also received his early education. He moved to the Government College, Lahore, where he secured degrees in English literature and Arabic. By the time he had finished in 1934, his name had begun to be recognized by the literary establishment in Lahore.

In 1935, Faiz took his first job—a lecturership in English at the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Amritsar. He lived in that city for the next seven years. He formed some of the most abiding friendships of his life during those years. It was in Amritsar that he first read the Communist Manifesto, of which experience he said later: 'I read the Manifesto once and the way ahead was illumined.'

He married a young English girl, Alys George, in 1941 and a year later joined the war publicity department of the then Government of India. He stayed long enough to become a lieutenant colonel. No one could have been made less for the army than Faiz, but he felt that in the struggle against Nazism and Fascism, if a uniform had to be worn then a uniform should be worn. Perhaps it was for his work during the war that he was later given the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.).

In early 1947, the late Mian Iftikharuddin set up the Progressive Papers Ltd in Lahore and Faiz was asked to become the first editor of the English daily, the *Pakistan Times*. He also came to head the editorial boards of the *Times'* sister publications, the Urdu daily *Imroze* and the

. 'Nationalized' with other privately-run institutions in 1972.

Urdu literary and political weekly, *Lail o-Nahar*.

One hopes that soon an anthology of Faiz's powerful editorials and articles written for the *Times* against the communal madness of the riots and carnage of 1947 will be brought out. Faiz was a stylist and had he chosen to write in English, he would have been assured of the same eminence that was to be his in Urdu. The Progressive Papers were the first organized effort to put Pakistan on a progressive and secular path, an effort that was brutally crushed in 1958 when Field Marshal Ayub Khan took over the papers and placed them under the so-called National Press Trust, a black and ignoble institution that no government has found it expedient to abolish, despite professions to that effect, either prior to assuming office or immediately after assuming it.

In 1951, Faiz was arrested for his complicity in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case. This was in Liaquat Ali Khan's time. The case was almost farcical since the 'conspiracy' was discovered months after it had been given up as impractical. A number of senior army officers, including General Akbar Khan and his wife Nasim (dubbed by the press the Lady Macbeth of the episode), were also arrested and sentenced.

Faiz spent four years in prison where he produced two collections *Dast-i-Saba* (The Wind Writes) and *Zindan Nama* (Prison Journal), apart from a collection of letters *Saleebain Merey Darechey Main* (Crucifixes in my Window).

Faiz was released in 1955 and returned to the Progressive Papers Ltd. When Pakistan's first martial law regime came to power, having overthrown the constitutional government headed by Malik Feroz Khan Noon, in October 1958, Faiz was abroad. On his return home in December, he was placed under 'preventive detention' to prevent him from doing what, it was not explained. This continued for several months. No chargesheet was provided as the newly-promulgated martial law 'regulations' gave the military

authorities enough powers to commit as many irregularities as they wished. The Ayub Khan tradition has continued, give or take a few intervening years.

It was after his release from 'preventive detention' and with free journalism no more than a memory, that Faiz turned to the cinema. He wrote the script and screenplay for the award-winning film *Jago Huva Savera* (Awake, the Morning is Here). Directed by A.J. Kardar, the film told the story of a poor community struggling against social and political oppression. It was during these years that Faiz wrote several songs and lyrics for films, most of them made by his friends like Hameed Akhtar and Shamim Ashraf Malik.

The last film produced by Faiz—again with A.J. Kardar—was never released. When the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was overthrown by General Zia-ul-Haq in July 1977, the film was in the final stages of completion. Its financing had come from the official National Film Development Corporation. Since Faiz was both the producer and the writer, it was only to be imagined that the new rulers of Pakistan would go over the project with a high-resolution magnifying glass. They found the film 'anti-military' and 'anti-Islam'. A high-powered martial law team held an inquiry and it is said that Faiz was subjected to a fairly harsh—though not in a physical sense—interrogation. Perhaps, one of these days when there is an order in Pakistan which does not feel threatened by Faiz and his ideas, his last excursion into the cinema will be completed and released.

In 1962 Faiz was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize, an honour that has not come the way of any other Pakistani. However, the establishment in Pakistan made this the basis of attacking Faiz for his communism and 'adherence to other than nationalist ideals.' These years were difficult ones for Faiz. Disheartened by the situation at home, he spent two of them abroad, mostly in London, where he all but settled down. However, he was one of those men who could not long stay away from his country and his people.

In 1964, he returned, but not to Lahore, his city of lights, but to Karachi, where he became principal of a school run in the poorest and most derelict part of that sprawling city.

He lived there until 1972.

When the putrid regime of General Yahya Khan finally made way for the first elected government in Pakistan's history in December 1971, Faiz was asked to organize and head the Pakistan National Council of the Arts in Islamabad by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Two years later, he returned to Lahore as Consultant on Culture to the Government of Pakistan. Besides organizing a music research cell and heading a commission on cultural planning, Faiz was asked to represent the country in a number of international conferences. After the military takeover of General Zia-ul-Haq in 1977, Faiz resigned.

Another period of exile, a longer one this time, was to begin for the poet in early 1978. He was asked to take up the chief editorship of the Afro-Asian Writers' magazine *Lotus*, then being published from Beirut. He stayed there until the Israeli attack of June 1982. He only left the city at the behest of Yassir Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, who had become a close personal friend and admirer of the poet. Some of the poems written during the time are included in this collection. They remain some of the most moving pieces in his body of work.

Perhaps there is no better way of ending this account than by reproducing a translation of one of Faiz's greatest poems—*Dedication*—which contains, in essence, all the major themes of his life and work.¹

To this day
And
To the anguish of today,
The anguish of today which is indignant at life's
resplendent garden.

1. Translated by Dr Imdad Husain (courtesy: weekly *Viewpoint*, Lahore).

A forest of yellow leaves,
A forest of yellowing leaves, which is my homeland;
A society of anguish which is my homeland.

To the withered life of the clerks,
To their moth-eaten hearts and tongues;
To the postmen,
To the tonga-wallahs,
To the railwaymen,
To the hungry stalwarts of factories;
To the world's emperor, owner of all that is, God's
representative on earth,

The farmer;
Whose cattle have been driven away by the tyrants,
Whose daughter has been abducted by the dacoits,
Part of whose tiny farm has been filched by the Patwari,
And the rest taken over by the government by way of
revenue;

Whose turban is trampled into tatters by ruffians.
To the sorrow-laden mothers
Whose infants moan and cry through the night
In dumb inconsolable agony,
In the tired arms of their wakeful mothers.

To those pretty damsels, whose flower-like eyes
Have dimmed and withered,
Gazing into fruitless expectancy at curtains and
windows.

To those wives whose limbs are weary,
Decorating the loveless and hypocritical beds of their
husbands.

To those windows,
To the little lanes and mohallas of the city,
With whose despoiled dust the moon often performs
ablutions,
Under whose shadows mourns the henna of the
damsels' veils,

The tinkle of their bangles, the perfume of their ringlets,
And the smell of the yearning bosoms burning in their
own sweat.

To the students,
Who, carrying with them the thirst for knowledge,
Knocked at the doors of the pompous torch-bearers of
learning;
To those innocents who travelled with their tiny lamps,
but did not return home.

Aching for more light of learning and found
That what was being doled out at the destination
Was utter darkness and the shadow's of endless nights.

To those prisoners,
In whose bosoms the glowing jewels of tomorrow's
hope,
Have been fanned into guiding stars,
Through the painful blasts of the prison-house.

To the ambassadors of the days to come
Who lay their lives, scattering, flower-like,
The fragrance of their message.

a fragment

Faiz on His Boyhood and Youth

Our poets have always complained of the indifference suffered at the hands of their contemporaries; in fact, this has been a perennial theme in our poetry. As far as I am concerned, it is the other way round. I have had such kindness and love showered on me—by friends, acquaintances and, even virtual strangers—that I often feel that I do not deserve it. The little I have done, does not measure up to what I have received. I should have done more to make myself worthy of what people have given to me so willingly.

And this feeling of inadequacy is not something which came to me in my later years. Even as a child, I felt the same way. When I was a small boy in school, for some reason that I could not understand, my classmates seemed to have decided that I was their leader. I must confess that I have never had, what are called, qualities of leadership. In school, to become lionized as I was, one should either have been a "tough guy" or have outshone the others in scholarship. I was alright as a student. I could even play a few games, but I was never the sort of distinguished student of whom note is taken.

When I think of my childhood, I see a house full of women, a crowd of them, actually. We were three brothers. My younger brother Inayat and my elder brother, Tufail, used to spend their time playing in total defiance of orders to the contrary from the ladies' brigade. I alone had fallen into their formidable hands.

This was both a blessing and a loss. These ladies indoctrinated me into spending a frightfully straight life. Then, as now, I have found myself congenitally incapable of uttering a single obscenity or making a rude gesture. On the other hand, I feel that I was denied the playful moments

associated with childhood. I remember myself watching from a distance the boys in the street flying kites, or playing marbles or spinning tops. I did not find the courage to join them, because it was all said to be perfectly frivolous.

My teachers were always kind to me. I don't know what happens today, but in our school, boys used to be regularly punished. The teachers of my time were executioners in the old tradition. As for myself, not only was I never even touched by any of them, but I was always somehow made the class monitor. At times, I used to be assigned the unhappy job of punishing the guilty ones. "Slap this one, slap that one." This to me was a most arduous task, though I had found a way round it. I would gently touch the offender on the cheek or tug at his ear, in pursuance of my instructions. Occasionally, I would get caught by the teacher who would shout: "What do you think you are doing? Slap him hard."

So, these essentially are the two deep impressions from my childhood. One, that I denied myself the small playful pleasures which characterize a normal childhood, and two, that I received limitless love from my friends, classmates and teachers. In this, I have been singularly fortunate.

In the mornings, I used to go with my father to the mosque for prayers. I would wake up when the *azan* was sounded. We would spend an hour or two in the mosque and after the prayers were over, we would stay back to hear Maulvi Mohammad Ibrahim Sialkoti speak about the Quran and its meaning. He was a renowned scholar of his times. My father would then take me for a walk and by the time we got home, it was time to go to school. At night, my father would have me write letters for him. He had some difficulty writing by that time, so I was his secretary. I would also read the newspaper to him. Now that I look back, I realize that it was then that I became fond of reading and writing.

Another memory comes back to me. There was a shop next to our house, where one could hire books to take home for

reading. It used to cost us two paise to borrow a book. The man who ran the shop was, for some reason, addressed as "bara bhai". His shop was a treasure house of Urdu literature. The books one was supposed to be reading in class six or seven, are now extinct. Books such as *Talism-i-Hoshruha*, *Fasana-i-Azad* and the novels of Abdul Halim Sharar. I seem to have gone through all of them at that age. Then I moved on to poetry. I read Dagh, Mir and Ghalib, although, I must confess, that Ghalib was a little beyond me, not that I comprehended the others fully. However, their poetry left a profound impact on me. That was when, I think, I got interested in it.

One of the *munshis* who used to work in my father's office, once got angry about something I had done and informed me promptly that he was going to report my doings to my father, namely, that I read novels instead of my school books. This really terrified me. I begged him not to do so, but there was no pity in his heart for this boy gone astray. I was presently summoned by my father who said, "I am told you read novels." I shook my head in affirmation of the charge. "If you must read novels, then read English novels. Urdu novels can be a lot of trash. The city library in the Sialkot fort has plenty of what you should be reading," he said without admonition.

So, I began to read English novels, Dickens, Hardy and God knows what else. Like poetry, I did not understand half the time what I was reading, but reading I was. For one thing, it improved my English. When I was in the tenth class, I would often catch my teachers making mistakes in language. Off and on, I would point them out. And though I was never punished, once my English teacher said to me, "If you know more than I do, then why don't you take my place instead of coming to my class?".

In those days, I sometimes used to have a strange experience. It would seem to me that the sky had suddenly changed colour, objects had moved away into infinity and the colour of the sun had turned henna. My surroundings

would appear to me like a giant screen on which everything was like a painted image. I have had the same strange experience in later years, but not for some time now.

There used to be *mushairas*, generally in an old *havrli* in front of our house. They were all arranged by Pandit Raj Narain Arman. Another gentleman, Munshi Sirajuddin, who used to be Mir Munshi to the Maharaja of Kashmir and a friend of Allama Iqbal, used to preside over these gatherings. I began writing poetry in the last year of school. It was more of rhyming than poetry. I was even asked to read at one or two *mushairas*. Once, Munshi Sirajuddin said to me, "Young fellow, I know that you work very hard on your poetry, but spend your time on your studies. Your mind still lacks the maturity that poetry requires. Right now, it is a waste of time." I stopped writing poetry.

When I joined Murray College, Sialkot, I met Professor Yusuf Salim Chishti who used to teach Urdu. He also wrote commentaries on Iqbal later. He was fond of holding *mushairas* and he would often ask me to compose a *ghazal* on the basis of a stray line he had chosen from one of the known poets. That was when I found that my rhyming was now getting an appreciative audience. He said to me once, "You should spend more time doing this. Who knows, one of these days, you may become a poet." This advice was, of course, totally contrary to that rendered by Munshi Sirajuddin.

Then I went to Government College, Lahore, where I met Prof. A.S. Bokhari "Pitras". Dr. M.D. Taseer was at the time teaching at the Islamia College. Some time later, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum came to the Government College. I also got to know people like Imtiaz Ali Taj, Charagh Hasan Hasrat, Hafiz Jullandri and Akhtar Shirani. In those days, the relationship between teachers and students was more in the nature of a personal friendship. I may not have learnt much in college, but I learnt a great deal from these wonderful men. Whenever I would leave one of them, I would feel that I was walking away with something

precious.

There is so much that I learnt from my friends. I would first read to them, whatever I had written and only after they had given it their approval, would I recite it at a *mushaira*. Any verse I did not particularly like myself or a friend thought little of, I would just cross out. By the time, I was doing my M.A., I had begun to write poetry regularly.

Because of my friend Khwaja Khurshid Anwar, I got interested in music. Khurshid was originally a revolutionary and part of the Bhagat Singh group. He was even sentenced, but was later reprieved. So, from revolution, he turned to music. Days, I would spend in college and evenings, at the house of his father, Khwaja Ferozuddin, where the great masters of the day would come and perform. That is where I first heard Ustad Tawwakul Hussain Khan, Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan, Ustad Ashiq Ali Khan and Ustad Chotey Ghulam Ali Khan. Rafiq Ghaznavi, my friend and a contemporary of these great musicians, I also met at that time. He was at the Law College, but I don't think he ever attended a class. I would often find myself either in Khurshid's or Rafiq's room in the evenings and that is where I really got to know about serious music.

When my father died, I found that there was literally nothing the family had been left with. For many years afterwards, we went through difficult times, but even those I enjoyed. I learnt a lot. My friendships deepened and my circle of friends, though small, stayed together. I recall two friends from Quetta, Ehtashamuddin and Sheikh Ahmed Hassan, also Dr Hamiduddin. Many were the evenings that we spent together. A great deal else happened during those years of youth, the sort of things which happen in youth.

In the summer holidays, I either used to go with Khwaja Khurshid Anwar, or my brother, Tufail, to Srinagar. I had a sister living in Lyallpur, which is where I met Bari Alig and his group. My elder sister was in Dharamsala. I always felt struck by the sheer beauty of that hilly landscape. I have always felt more attracted by people than by the beauty of

nature. I used to feel that there was also a beauty to the streets and roads of the cities I knew, no less moving than the splendour of mountains and valleys. You needed to have a certain kind of eye or vision to see it, though.

I remember that when we lived in Masti Gate, Lahore, I was always conscious of the strange beauty of our house in one of the low-lying streets. There was an open drain that ran in front of it and a small back garden. Then there were larger gardens around the area. I remember moonlit nights with their shadows and silver patches, that would hide much of the drabness one saw during the day. Some of my poems date back to those moments spent alone at night looking at that strange and magical transformation.

During my M.A. days, I was not always regular in my classes. If I felt like going, I would go; otherwise, I would stay away. Books, not part of the required reading, I would devour, so I never really obtained much distinction in examinations. However, I knew that I knew a bit more than those who habitually stood first or second. This, my teachers knew. Sometimes, Prof. Dickinson or Prof. Harish Chander Katapalia, when not in the mood to lecture, would ask me to take their place. Prof. Bokhari, however, was very proper and would never do that. Prof. Dickinson used to teach us nineteenth century English prose, a subject he was not really interested in. Once he asked me to prepare a couple of lectures for him—as he asked a few others. “References where you are not sure of them,” he added, “you should check with me”. So, in a way, I began to teach quite early in life.

In those days, it never actually once occurred to me that I would eventually become a poet. And nothing could have been farther from my mind than politics. Aware, though I was—and even influenced intellectually—by the great movements of the day, such as the Congress agitation, the Khilafat, and Bhagat Singh's revolutionary and youthful upsurge, personally, I was not involved in any of them.

At one time, I wanted to become a great cricketer. I was very fond of cricket as a boy, even played a bit of it. Then I

wanted to become a critic or a research scholar. However, I became neither, but, instead, moved to Amritsar to the M.A.O. College as a lecturer.

I suppose the happiest period of my life was spent in Amritsar. I enjoyed teaching and my friendships with my students. I met them even outside the college and, I think, I learnt a great deal from them.

Friendships, formed during those years, I have maintained to this day. It was also at Amritsar that I seriously began to write poetry. Again, it was in that city that I became politically conscious, largely due to the friends I had made there—Mahmood-uz-Zafar, Dr Rashid Jahan, and, later, Dr Taseer. I had entered a new world. I began to work in the trade union movement, became involved in a league for civil liberties and joined the Progressive Writers' Movement. Never before had I felt so much at peace with myself and my environment.

I was very much part of the great controversies that developed around the Progressive Writers' Movement. I also became editor of the new Urdu literary magazine *Adb-i-Latif*. At the time, there were two groups among writers: those who believed in literature for the sake of literature and those who maintained that literature had a higher social purpose. Their debates were fiery and I was never far from the scene of action.

When radio came to the subcontinent, many of my friends went over to join the new medium. Friends like Syed Rashid Ahmed and Somnath Chib. Some years later, they both became, in succession, station directors at Lahore. I was a frequent visitor to the Lahore station, along with Dr Taseer, Charag Hasan Hasrat, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum and Pandit Hari Chand Akhtar. In those days, radio programmes were not planned by the programme producers, as much as by people like us. We would think up plays, features, interviews, even short stories. I remember writing quite a few myself.

When Rashid moved to Delhi, I began to travel to that city

frequently. Some of the friends from those days were: Israrul Haq Majaz, Ali Sardar Jaffrey, Jan Nisar Akhtar, Mueen Ahsan Jazbi and Makhdoom Mohyuddin. Those were hectic days but also days of leisure and a listless, kind of pleasure (unfinished).

From a conversation with Mirza Zafar-ul-Hassan

Translated from Urdu by Khalid Hasan

*Faiz : A Personal Memoir**

Khalid Hasan

Faiz returned to Pakistan in 1982, something he had wanted to do all along. Perhaps it was not an easy decision, but the fact that he finally took it, adds to his greatness. He left Pakistan in 1977 and though he travelled extensively during the next few years in Europe, the Middle East, the Socialist countries and North America, Beirut remained his home.

At the end of 1981, when he passed through Karachi, he had some trouble getting out. His plane was diverted and he left the airport to see friends. Getting out wasn't so easy. It is to the credit of Pakistan's immigration and intelligence officials that they were able to determine the identity of the passenger who, it now turns out, was or had been on their list of "undesirable elements". He was, in the end, allowed to leave, which only shows that good sense is not entirely extinct in the Land of the Pure.

Some people advised Faiz not to return to Pakistan permanently, but though he listened to them patiently, his mind was made up. It is another matter that since his return, men like Mian Mohammed Shafi (Meem Sheen¹) have been exhorting him to devote his life to the service of Islam. I suppose they know what they are talking about, because they have always claimed to be guided by the divine imperative. It is easier to argue with God, but those who presume to act in His name, are a little more intractable. In any case, Faiz knows his Meem Sheens well, and over a fairly

*This was written in 1962.

1. Mian Mohammed Shafi "Meem Sheen": veteran Pakistani journalist who was probably the finest political reporter of his generation, but with the years, has grown quite reactionary in his views. He was also a nominated member of General Zia-ul-Haq's *Majlis-i-Shoora* or Consultative Assembly of hand-picked men and women.

long period of time.

I am glad Faiz has returned to Pakistan. Like a shaft of sunlight, his presence will irradiate a landscape full of forebodings and echoing with empty words and even emptier slogans.

In 1981, I wrote to Faiz in Beirut asking him if he was disillusioned with what had happened to Pakistan in recent years. He wrote: "What has happened is not our pre-ordained destiny, nor what the people necessarily want. Islam is not a stumbling block in the march toward progress. The laws of politics and social change, unlike the laws of nature, do not always follow a straight line. There are many deviations, but this should not be taken to mean that they do not operate. Delays can occur, but ultimately truth manifests itself. No night is without end."

Faiz has never really written about himself, though he has not discouraged others from doing so. Those who should write about him, either do not or, when they do, the narrative tends to be marred by ineptness, platitudes and sentiment.

The *Nawai Waqt*² variety is, of course, more familiar to both his friends and detractors. In the newspaper's stylebook, a reference to Faiz must read: famous communist poet and red intellectual and Rawalpindi Conspiracy case³ convict, Faiz. . . .

Although more has been written about Faiz's poetry than about the man, no sustained attempt has been made at a comprehensive and critical assessment of his work. Since I am not a literary critic and have no ambitions in that direction, I would only like to write a personal account, having known him over a long period of time.

What was admiration has turned into love. Ironically, it is mostly in his exile that I have had the opportunity to spend

2. *Nawai Waqt*: a right-wing national Urdu daily newspaper from Lahore which has consistently attacked Faiz and all liberal and progressive ideas.

3. In 1951, a group of army officers was apprehended along with some civilians, including Faiz, for conspiracy to overthrow the government. Faiz was kept in custody for nearly four years.

time with him. My account is, therefore, confined to our contacts in London.

This is one city he has always returned to. The only time he decided to make his permanent home abroad, he chose London. This was in the early 1960s; but he went back. The poem *yar ashna nahin koyi takrain kis se jam; kis dilruba ke nam pai khali saboo karam*⁴ was written during those days and may contain a clue as to why he chose to return. I like to imagine the poem came to him in a pub, and when that happened, he was alone.

But that is what I like to imagine. Faiz is never alone in London. He is always surrounded by people: people he knows and people he does not know. I have never been able to tell the difference, because to him no one is a stranger. His warmth and concern for people—friends, foes, acquaintances—is like London rain which falls, in Oscar Wilde's phrase, on the just and unjust alike.

Faiz knows his ways around London. Actually, his sense of direction, like his memory for names and faces, is quite uncanny. London is a city without end, especially if you get lost, which I often used to do, particularly in its eastern and southwestern stretches. I remember a few summers ago getting lost while driving Faiz to somebody's house. For some time, I kept pretending that being a Londoner, by circumstance if not by choice, I knew more or less exactly the direction in which I was headed. But I was lost and I knew it. "I am lost," I told Faiz sheepishly. He told me to stop the car, which I did. He surveyed the area nonchalantly, then told me to proceed straight, then take a couple of complicated turns and, to my great surprise, we arrived at the house we were looking for. He told me by way of explanation that he had been here once before.

And once when I was driving him to Highgate, by mistake

4. Freely translated, "with neither friend nor acquaintance in sight, I sit in the tavern, wondering with whom I should clink my goblet of wine".

I got on to a dual carriageway which seemed to be going everywhere except Highgate. I thought Faiz had not noticed, until he said to me, "If you don't take a right turn soon enough, we would end up in Oxford."

But then Faiz should know his way around London. This is a city he has known since he was a young man. I might add that I am acquainted with people who have been visiting London for years but who would be quite unable to take you from Knightsbridge to Regent Street unassisted. Faiz knows his streets and it is perhaps not an accident that the street is a recurring image of great power in Faiz's poetry.

I think in the winter of 1981 something happened that changed the London Faiz had always come to. It will never again be the same place for him. He may not even want to come here as often as he used to. As one grows older, one begins to accept the finality and inevitability of death; but the sense of loss and bereavement increases with years. For Faiz, the death of Comrade Mohammed Afzal one cold day in February 1981 would remain a devastating blow. They were very close friends.

Faiz always used to stay with Afzal in Highgate. It was only in recent years that Faiz began to put up with Majid Ali and Zahra Nigah⁵ in their Knightsbridge flat. Afzal had not been well for some time and Faiz did not wish to impose himself. I did not know Afzal in Lahore, because he left Pakistan before my time, as it were. But I had always known who he was and how much he had contributed to the trade union movement in the early years of independence. In London I always found him to be an acerbic man with a dry, almost cynical sense of humour, a bit on the quiet side and somewhat impatient with what displeased him. Faiz once said to me that Afzal gave the impression of being irritable because of his indifferent health. In his younger days, he was

5. Majid Ali and Zahra Nigah: Majid Ali is an international economic and financial consultant and is married to the popular poet Zahra Nigah who burst into prominence in the early 1960s.

a live wire, a man of tremendous courage and commitment.

I have met people like Afzal abroad, committed people who once believed in the people's struggle and strove to make Pakistan a secular, progressive and tolerant state, but who were either hounded out or made to reach the end of their patience. Over the years, the issues which once seemed so important, began to lose their urgency, giving place to detachment and cynicism. If in physical terms their lives became more comfortable, spiritually they perhaps diminished a little. A bit of guilt, a deep tinge of unhappiness and a feeling of loneliness that exile, forced or self-imposed, invariably brings.

Faiz and Afzal had a deep relationship. They could sit in a room for hours without speaking and yet remain fully aware of each other, an alchemy only an old and intensely-shared friendship can produce.

When Afzal died, Faiz was in London. A friend told me that Faiz looked shattered. He became very quiet, cut his visit short and flew back to Beirut.

When Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum⁶ died I was in London. So was Faiz. He mourned deeply but in silence, not a silence of acceptance but one of limitless sorrow. I began to talk to Faiz about Sufi Tabassum, the way he was, of evenings spent with him, drinking and listening to poetry, of his humour and his life-long poverty which he bore with such cheerful, mystic indifference. I wanted Faiz to talk about him.

At one point he spoke: "We were merely amateurs. He was the master. When one was in doubt, one would go to him. He could set your doubts at rest on language, idiom, diction, syntax or usage. Now that he is gone, there really is no one one could think of turning to."

6. Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum: celebrated scholar of Urdu and Persian and a poet of unique lyrical power, both in Urdu and Punjabi. He taught Persian and Urdu most of his life at the Government College, Lahore.

Tajammul Hussain⁷ once told me a delightful story. Faiz one day asked Sufi Tabassum to interpret a Persian couplet for him, since he found it to be obtuse. Sufi asked him to recite the couplet which Faiz did. "Well, no wonder it is obtuse to you. You are not reading it right," he said. Indeed, he was the master.

Faiz, when talking about himself, never employs the first person singular. He either uses its more impersonal plural form or the third person indefinite. It is always with some effort that he can be made to talk about himself. This humility is not our characteristic as a people. Here again, Faiz is unique.

When Faiz is in London, there are a number of people he phones as soon as he has installed himself. News of his arrival spreads like a jungle fire and unless you are early, your chances of getting him more or less by himself are extremely unlikely. I have always recognized the privilege that being present in his company confers. He is a man of immense affections. Ashfaq Ahmad⁸ once described Faiz as a *malamti sufi*.⁹ The amount of abuse and calumny Faiz has taken in his life should certainly place him in the mystic order.

Faiz once wrote : *jo ayai ayai ke hum dil kushada rakhte hain*¹⁰, a line which epitomizes his attitudes to life and people. Everyone wants to be around him. There are some who would insist on actually sitting at his feet, but when he is not around, they would make nasty, small-minded remarks

7. Tajammul Hussain: man about town, poet, litterateur, but, more than that what they call in Punjabi "friend of friends". Younger brother of Altaf Gauhar, Field Marshal Ayub Khan's Information Secretary.
8. Ashfaq Ahmad: popular short story writer and radio and television playwright.
9. A school among sufis which carried their rejection of conventional religiosity to the extent that they were branded as heretics and sinners.
10. Freely rendered, "let him enter who so wishes, I have a welcoming heart"

about him. Though Faiz is perfectly aware of this strange, unpleasant breed, he has never shown it. One such person who expresses great devotion to Faiz in his presence, once spoke about him in highly dismissive terms to me. He said that Faiz had outwritten himself and was now only a shadow of the poet he once was and should really know it. I mentioned this to Faiz, but he merely smiled.

Faiz is an immensely patient man. At times, it can be taxed to the breaking point, especially when he is in London. This happened one evening at the BBC club. He got caught up with a friend who has lived in London for well over 20 years, but has now reached a point where he is incapable of listening to anyone when he is holding forth himself. He keeps talking incessantly, without pause or respite. It is not that he is particularly committed to certain subjects. If one day he is obsessed with Soviet foreign policy, the next time he may be declaiming his views on the vagaries of the English weather, the problem of Afghanistan or the deteriorating quality of English lager.

The evening I am referring to lasted two hours. I am doubtful if Faiz was able to get a single word across. Others came and were driven away by the soul-destroying boredom of the monologue. Faiz persevered without complaint, though he did say later that next time, he would like to be elsewhere when the gentleman was around.

In London, as no doubt elsewhere, he has to suffer crank versifiers. There is one I know who published, not long ago, a collection of poems at his own expense and arranged for a series of "opening" ceremonies to be held to launch the book. When Faiz is in London, he not only has to take many phone calls from him, but actually has to listen to his poetry for extended periods, a crucifying experience without question, especially for someone of his sensibility. At the end of the ordeal and while it lasts, Faiz has nothing but encouraging words to offer. He has never spoken

disparagingly of anyone, least of all, poets, Iftikhar Arif¹¹ who wrote a poem attacking Faiz's lack of "involvement" in the 1971 war, told me that not once had Faiz mentioned the poem to him nor shown the least sign of disapproval. On the other hand, he has always treated Arif with great affection.

Faiz is not an admirer of politicians in general. He has few illusions about them. He has known too many of them over too long a period of time to be otherwise. But there are exceptions. With Mian Iftikharuddin,¹² his relationship was a special one. He was the first editor of his paper, the *Pakistan Times* and shared Iftikharuddin's idealism and commitment to progressive causes.

Faiz feels that Iftikharuddin was one of the first politicians to foresee the obscurantist hell hole Pakistan was moving towards. He tried to fight a rearguard action but was defeated by a miscellany of interests, both bureaucratic and political. Had the Azad Pakistan Party¹³ not been sabotaged, the course of Pakistan's history might well have been different.

Faiz also speaks with deep admiration about Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy.¹⁴ I reminded him that after he died, a western newspaper wrote that of the two links between East and West Pakistan—Suhrawardy and the Pakistan International Airlines—one was now gone. It wondered how long the airline would be able to keep the two halves together.

11. Iftikhar Arif: Pakistani poet, now living in London where he is director of Urdu Markaz, the only literary avenue available to poets and writers from India and Pakistan.

12. Mian Iftikharuddin: firebrand Punjabi politician who joined the All India Muslim League after a long association with the Indian National Congress. A close friend of the Nehru family.

13. Azad Pakistan Party: founded by Mian Iftikharuddin in the early 1950s as a coalition of progressive and liberal elements.

14. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy: eminent Bengali politician who was also briefly Prime Minister of Pakistan and perhaps the only politician who could have ensured national unity.

Mumtaz Hasan¹⁵ used to say: if this is the West wing and that is the East wing, then the question arises, where is the bird? I asked him if he knew the answer, but if he had one, he chose to keep it to himself.

Faiz has invested his entire life, sometimes it seems to me, in the maintenance of friendships. There can be no lessening of affection for those who have been once admitted to his circle. Whenever he is in London, he keeps an evening free for Faizul Hasan Chaudhry,¹⁶ whom he once described to me as Hamid Akhtar's¹⁷ Ludhiana crowd.

I think it was in the summer of 1979 when his children were in London to see him—Alys¹⁸ had gone to Canada—that we spent an evening at Faizul Hasan's house. Earlier, Faiz had for a time felt unwell in Beirut and though everything had been found in order later, nevertheless he had been put on a drinks and cigarettes quota. That evening, both Saleema and Muneza¹⁹ were keeping an eye on him and though Faiz buckles under any kind of discipline, he was accepting their occasional admonitions with more than good grace.

Faiz is a compulsive smoker.²⁰ Unlike most smokers, he

15. Mumtaz Hasan: celebrated civil servant whose contributions to literature, especially the study of Iqbal, archaeology and the arts would be long remembered.
16. Faizul Hasan Chaudhry: aligned for years with the progressive and trade union movement in Lahore. He has been living in London for well over twenty years.
17. Hamid Akhtar: well-known Pakistani writer, editor and film-maker. One of the stalwarts of the Progressive Writers' Movement in Bombay and Lahore.
18. Alys: Faiz's English wife who has stayed by his side through good times and bad. A journalist of note in her own right and known for her work in the women's movement and social uplift projects.
19. Saleema and Muneza: Faiz's daughters. Saleema is a painter and designer and Muneza was, for many years, a producer with Pakistan television.
20. Faiz no longer smokes, following doctors' orders, but says he still misses it badly.

has no brand loyalties. He will smoke anything. He puffs or drags at his cigarette in rapid-fire fashion and before it is half finished, he buries it absent-mindedly in the ashtray. One has hardly been snuffed out when he begins to reach for another. It does not seem as if he enjoys smoking, but he must obviously do so since he has been smoking for so many years. When he was in jail during the Rawalpindi Conspiracy case, he stopped smoking for a while.

That evening at Faizul Hasan's house, he was constantly being told by one or both of the girls that he had already gone through his quota. Saleema said that her father was really unwell in Beirut, a diagnosis which Faiz dismissed with something like "*Bhai koi aisi baat bhi nahin thi.*" He always talks about himself with imprecision, almost as if it was someone else he had in mind.

One day at Majid Ali's house, a visitor who obviously considered himself well-versed in international affairs, was trying to tell Faiz to exercise his influence with the Russians to persuade them to pull out of Afghanistan.

"Let me tell you one thing," Faiz said. "The Russians talk politics seriously only to members of the Communist Party. I am not one. If you are a member, you are treated differently, on another wavelength. This is something very basic. To them the party is the prime thing. It is true that I am accorded every courtesy and respect because of the Lenin Peace Prize, but it is not for me to talk hard politics to them."

To someone else, who thought Faiz could flit in and out of Moscow as and when he pleased, Faiz said that the Russians were formal people. In order to go to the Soviet Union, one would have to be invited. To materialize on a day of your choosing at the Moscow airport won't do. "It is not their style," he added.

I never saw so much of Faiz in Pakistan as I saw of him in London. For one thing, when I moved to Lahore, he was living in Karachi and when he returned to live in Lahore, I was abroad. I have known Faiz since I was a boy. He was a

friend of my father through M.D. Taseer.²¹ The friendship between Dr. Taseer and my father, Dr Noor Hussain of Kashmir, went back to the early 1930s.

One of my first memories of Faiz is in our house in Gulmurg, Kashmir. "He would go to bed with his shoes on," my mother once told me. When Faiz married Alys, they came to Kashmir and stayed with us for a while. My brother Bashir recalls driving the two of them in an old Austin-7 around the Jammu hills. The fact that after partition, we settled down in Sialkot, is another link with Faiz. That city is in his bones. He grew up there, went to the old Scotch Mission School and then Murray College, before moving to Lahore to join the Government College.

In London we talked a great deal about his childhood in Sialkot and his growing up in that city. His father took him to Maulvi Mir Hasan²² and Maulvi Mohammad Ibrahim Sialkoti,²³ asking the two great men to accept his little son as a student. Faiz learnt Arabic in Maulvi Mir Hasan's *maktab*. He was to study under him again at Murray College. Faiz studied the Quran, *hadith* and *fiqh* in Maulvi Ibrahim's mosque. The mosque still exists and is known as such. Faiz told me that Maulvi Ibrahim was one of the greatest Islamic scholars of his time.

Nothing that Faiz learnt as a boy from these two men, has time or age managed to erase from his memory. He began to memorize the Quran in those days and committed nearly half of it to memory. He quotes from it often. He is equally familiar with all the great Quranic commentaries and the principal works of Islamic *fiqh*. His knowledge of Islamic history is almost encyclopaedic, but like all things else, he wears it lightly and with grace. Some years ago Altaf

21. Dr M.D. Taseer: eminent poet, critic and educationist. He was married to Alys's elder sister, Bilquees.

22. Maulvi Mir Hasan: distinguished scholar and teacher who taught both Iqbal and Faiz.

23. Maulvi Mohammad Ibrahim Sialkoti: outstanding theologian and teacher of the Holy Quran, Hadith and Islamic history and tradition.

Gauhar²⁴ said to Faiz in London, "Perhaps it is time that you return to Pakistan and teach them Islam because enough heresy is being committed in its name."

At one point, Faiz wanted to return to Sialkot and live there permanently. He feels tremendous nostalgia for the dark, cobbled streets of the city where he grew up. People in Sialkot still think of him as a native son. I remember Faiz coming to Sialkot in the early 1950s to preside over a debate arranged by the Murray College Students' Union. As he arrived at the college gates, he asked if Chacha Mohammad Din was still around. Chacha used to sell oranges and *lobia* outside the college when Faiz was a student. Many generations of students had passed through his hands. I think he died in the late 1960s. He was a great character and everyone owed him money including Faiz, Chacha told me. Chacha saw Faiz and shouted, "Oai Faiz, have you forgotten Chacha?" Faiz went across and they talked about old times as if nothing had changed.

One man Faiz often remembered in London was Khwaja Ferozuddin Faiz who died several years ago. Feroz and Faiz were boyhood friends and though Feroz was not a poet, his last name was taken to cement forever his friendship with Faiz. In Sialkot he was popularly known as Feroz "Tommy", because of his debonaire good looks and high style.

I once reminded Faiz that the people of Sialkot had always excelled in finding nicknames for their leading sons. There was Shafi "Bottle", called that because when he laughed, it sounded like a soda bottle being uncorked. Then there was Shafi "Bagla", nearly seven foot tall and much resembling the bird in question or Mian Mohammad Bashir "Cobra", who had a surrealistic resemblance to the reptile after which he was named.

Faiz joined the Government College, Lahore in his third

24. Altaf Gauhar: now editor of the London monthly magazine *South and Third World Quarterly*. Also, secretary-general of Third World Foundation.

year. He took the written entrance examination and was successful. He told me that soon after he joined, they were given an essay to write. The one Faiz wrote was considered so good that it was put on the college notice board, making Faiz an instant celebrity. A few weeks later, the class was given another exercise. Faiz, confident of his prowess now, wrote, what he thought was a profound and scholarly piece. He was quite shocked to discover that he had been given low marks. When he asked his teacher, an Englishman whose name I do not recall, he was told, "The first thing you wrote was original. It was your own. This time you have merely reproduced what you read elsewhere. You have an original mind. Keep it that way. Don't reproduce what others have said."

I asked Faiz several times in London to put together an anthology of Urdu poetry. He said he had done one several years ago. The manuscript, of which there was only one copy, was taken by a woman who was living in New York at the time. She got married after a while and lost the manuscript in the process. Poetry and marriage obviously make poor companions.

Faiz had once compiled an anthology of Persian poetry with Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum. I am not sure where the manuscript is. Sufi was not averse to handing it over to a lady either. As long as it was Farida Khanum,²⁵ the manuscript should be retrievable.

Faiz is a devotee of Iqbal, but of the living poet, not the fossil he has been turned into by the religious commissars and various departments of the government. Faiz has often talked about editing a selection of Iqbal's poetry with a critical introduction.²⁶ He told me that Iqbal's real views on Islam and other fundamental questions were contained in his English writings, something the mullahs do not read. If

25. Farida Khanum: popular ghazal singer and a great devotee of Sufi and Faiz.

26. In the late 1970s, Faiz published a volume of verse translations of Iqbal's Persian poetry.

Iqbal did this to put his message beyond the reach of the obscurantists, little did he realize that most of the obscurantists in Pakistan were destined to be English-speaking.

Faiz told me that when he was a young boy, he was taken to the annual session of the Anjuman-i-Islamia, Sialkot, by his father. Iqbal was present. Faiz delivered a recitation from the Quran, as little boys still do. "I was so tiny," he recalled, "that I was made to stand on something so that people could see me. After I had finished, Iqbal patted me on the head with great affection. My father, of course, knew him well and intimately."

Faiz has travelled a great deal in recent years and though he briefly made Beirut his home, he never thought twice about not returning to Pakistan. To him, Pakistan has always been the place where he belongs and which is home. In 1980 he was offered a succession of appointments of great prestige in India, including a visiting professorship at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. He refused it like the others. Visiting India, he told me, was different, but to accept an assignment there would amount to accepting permanent exile from Pakistan. I once asked Faiz if I should take a job in Delhi which had been offered to me at a time when I needed one urgently. "That would amount to cutting your umbilical cord with Pakistan. Go elsewhere if you have to."

I do not write this in an effort to assuage our reactionaries, because they are beyond redemption or argument. Faiz once said, "Those whom God Himself chooses to mislead, no mortal can help." I merely record this because he said this to me with some finality on two occasions. Normally, he is not the sort of person who passes final judgements, leaving them to God, the people and history.

Faiz is the only man I know who is not a shopper. He often stayed with Majid Ali in Hans Place, facing Harrods, but, as far as I know he never went inside. And to say that of a Pakistani in London is to place him in the Nobel Prize category.

One summer in 1980 when Faiz was in London, he asked me to pick him up in the morning. I materialized in the early

afternoon. It was a nice day with clear skies and rare London sunshine. We drank a couple of gins and tonic and then Faiz said, "Let's go and see a film." This sort of threw me as I had never thought of Faiz as a moviegoer. He told me that in Beirut, he had become one. We went looking for a movie to see, but couldn't really find anything. At one point, we found ourselves in the Euston Road area. Faiz suddenly remembered that there were a number of Indian and Pakistani places there which served *halva*, *puri* and honest-to-goodness *lassi*. He had been there a couple of times before. So after successfully beating the London one-way system—the ultimate imperialist conspiracy—a friend of mine calls it—we found a place called Diwana. Faiz was absolutely thrilled with the name. "That is really delightful—Diwana," he said a couple of times. I thought of all the havoc this word had wrought in Urdu and Persian poetry, Faiz himself having been responsible for some of it.

We ate a good deal, drank, what turned out to be, just as Faiz had promised, honest-to-goodness *lassi* and, in between, dealt with many of his admirers. When you are with Faiz, you get used to being accosted by strangers. Faiz meets them as if he had known them for years. He may not always remember names, but he almost never forgets a face.

When Faiz is in London, his nostalgia for Pakistan intensifies. London has so many reminders of Pakistan: the people, the restaurants, the old imperial link. One way he sublimates this nostalgia is by visiting places which, in the words of Athar Ali,²⁷ are "pure Mozang". One such Mozang is a kebab and tikka place in East London, called (what else!) the Lahore Kebab House.

Faiz told me about it once. One evening we decided to go there. I have two friends in East London, Mahmood Durrani and Munawwar Dar. Dar is a big, handsome Kashmiri from Sialkot who has done very well in the wholesale garment trade

27. Athar Ali: Pakistani journalist and broadcaster who has been with the BBC External Services for nearly two decades.

and is something of a *dada* of the area.

When we arrived in the East End, Dar and Durrani were waiting for us. We were a bit late, but the Lahore Kebab House had been informed and they were expecting us. The place had been kept open beyond normal hours. We ate as we would have eaten in Mozang. The place may not have met with the approval of a British health inspector, but it was the genuine article, not one of the sanitized tourist traps of central London.

Earlier, Durrani who runs a leather garment business off Commercial Road, had taken us to the famous East London pub Jack the Ripper. Inside the pub, there are framed facsimiles of newspaper pages of the day, describing in blood-curdling detail the surgeon-like handiwork of old Jack. The pub also displays a large wooden plaque, commemorating the deeds of the mysterious and possibly mad murderer. Nobody knows who Jack the Ripper was because he was never caught and the murders ceased suddenly.

However, East London has not forgotten him. On the other hand, it has honoured his memory by naming a pub after him in the very area where he practised his gory craft. We drank to Jack the Ripper after Faiz had carefully read all the plaques and newspaper facsimiles celebrating his exploits. On one thing, there is agreement. Jack the Ripper was a gentleman from the leisured classes. Long live the British leisured classes.

Faiz came to London a few weeks before his seventieth birthday. "You have reached the biblically-ordained age of three score and ten," I said to him. Someone asked him who the rather personable lady he had taken to lunch a day earlier was. "Before I disclose the identity of the personable lady in question," Faiz replied, "may I state for the record that I have retired from this department." Naturally, nobody believed him. To women, he has always been a charmer.

Whenever Faiz comes to London, he always takes a short trip to Birmingham. He generally stays with Badar and

Nasreen, a couple he has grown increasingly fond of over the years. And then Saleem Shahid²⁸ lives there too, as do Zia Mohyeddin and Naheed Siddiqui.²⁹ I wonder how many still remember Hafiz Hoshiarpuri's³⁰ famous ghazal, allegedly inspired or dedicated to Saleem or Razi Trimizi³¹, or both. People have, of course, been adding on to it, but the stamp of the master is unmistakable.

In 1980 when Faiz came to London, I offered to drive him to Birmingham in an old Toyota. "We should go through Oxford," Faiz suggested. "It is a nicer drive (he does not like motorways) and there is an old friend in Oxford from the Delhi days I have been meaning to look up." We left London around midday. It is always a hassle to get out of London. It can sometimes take you more time to get out of London than to get from London to Birmingham. It began to snow. The M-40 which takes you to Oxford was quite treacherous and I did not have snow tyres. The car was not pulling too well, some water having gone into the plugs. However, Faiz was paying no attention to our slow and somewhat hazardous progress.

I believe he is like that. Alys told me that when a bomb blasted away an apartment building next to theirs in Beirut, Faiz woke up briefly and then went back to sleep without much ado.

As we continued our journey, I fed a Taj Multani³² cassette

28. Saleem Shahid: well-known Pakistani broadcaster and television presenter. He recently retired from BBC's Asian Television Programme unit in Birmingham which he joined when it started. Lives in London—and Birmingham.
29. Zia Mohyeddin: famous Pakistan stage and screen actor and television producer who now does a weekly programme on British television from Birmingham for Third World viewers. Married to the talented classical dancer from Pakistan, Naheed Siddiqui.
30. Hafiz Hoshiarpuri: perhaps one of the greatest of modern Urdu poets in the classical mould.
31. Razi Trimizi: Urdu poet and broadcaster from Lahore. The poem in question is, unfortunately, somewhat unprintable, but an orally transmitted classic nevertheless.
32. Taj Multani: popular Punjabi kafi singer.

into the car stereo, a scintillating rendition of Khwaja Ghulam Farid's³³ kafis. "This is poetry of a very high order," Faiz said. Faiz was deeply moved by one of the lines *ishq hai sada pir*. I rewound the tape and played it again. "Listen to it carefully," Faiz said. "You will see that one of the greatest poets of the Punjab has no hesitation in making profuse and liberal use of Persian and Arabic words. This is something people like Najm Hussain Syed³⁴ either lose sight of or do not understand when they go on about the "purity" of the Punjabi language."

I said that Khwaja Farid had even employed an English word in one of his most famous kafis. *Sona nahin soonda, dukhan di appeal ai*. "That is the point," Faiz said. "To the poet, the supreme thing is poetry. He is not a grammarian or a lexicographer. Language is his tool, the material he uses to create. It is thus subservient to him, not he to it."

This conversation which I reproduced in an article in *Viewpoint*,³⁵ led to lively controversy. Izzat Majid, a young writer whose occasional pieces I have always found sharp and perceptive, wrote a somewhat intemperate article in *Viewpoint* attacking Faiz and accusing him of "cultural terrorism" and downgrading Punjabi. To everyone's surprise, since Faiz never replies to criticism, he wrote a rejoinder.

Though Faiz touched upon a host of points, I would like to quote one particular passage: "Unfortunately, some language enthusiasts among us today have made it a part of their credo that to prove your love for Punjabi, you must detest Urdu as the handmaiden of decadent courts and to demonstrate your loyalty to Urdu, Punjabi must be despised as the gobbledegook of illiterate yokels. This approach

33. Khwaja Ghulam Farid: famous Saraiki mystic poet whose kafis are sung throughout Punjab and Sind.

34. Najm Husain Syed: Punjabi scholar who maintains that foreign incursions into Punjabi should be resisted.

35. *Viewpoint*: progressive English weekly magazine from Lahore, edited by Mazhar Ali Khan.

obviously stems from petit bourgeois linguistic jingoism—although it is frequently veneered with progressive terminology.”

But this was an aside. I must return to our drive to Oxford. We managed to arrive in one piece. The car did not conk out as I had feared and Farid stayed with us through the driving snow, a far cry from the burning deserts where he had created poetry of such intensity and splendour.

We found the house we were looking for. Faiz found it, in fact. His friend turned out to be a lady of great charm. She was in Delhi during the war, working for the information department of the Government of India or the cell responsible for war propaganda. She later married the author Guy Wint. She has a daughter by him, Indira Joshi, the actress.

Mrs Wint is a Buddhist and teaches comparative religions at Oxford. Faiz asked her how her spiritual progress was going and she said, “Well, one keeps on, doesn’t one.” Faiz told me that she was an accomplished contemplative. We had a lunch of bread and cheese which we washed down with some beer. Faiz and she talked about old times. Mrs Wint must have been a smashing looking woman during her days. “So she was,” Faiz told me later. “Quite the toast of Delhi.” Buddhism must have come later, I thought. “Keep in touch Faiz. It was good to see you,” she said as we took our leave.

In Birmingham, as elsewhere, Faiz’s tribe was on the flourish. We spent long afternoons and evenings at Badar and Nasreen’s house. Salim Shahid, who only technically lives in Birmingham because almost all the time he is somewhere in London, was in town. He began to tell Faiz about some of his plans. He is always full of them. Faiz asked him what had happened to the restaurant he was going to open many years ago. “That is still on the cards,” Saleem replied, though I don’t think Faiz believed him. I may add that Saleem Shahid is one of the best gourmet cooks I have known. If he does one day open restaurant and becomes the head chef, he will send a lot of people out of business.

Almost on the eve of his birthday, Athar Ali and I spent a long evening with Faiz in a Knightsbridge pub I am very fond of. It is called the Turk's Head. They always have a log fire in the winter and you can stand with your back to it and sip your drink. That evening Faiz only wanted to be in Lahore. He said he would like to be with his family and friends. He asked about Abdullah Malik³⁶, Hamid Akhtar, Mazhar and Tahira, I.A. Rahman,³⁷ Syed Wajid Ali³⁸ and so many others. Lahore has always been Faiz's city of lights.

At one point I said to Faiz, "You know how much you are loved. You have always been more than a poet." He paused, then said with some difficulty, "I do not know why so much of peoples' affection has fallen to my share. One is only a poet after all." We said no more. Faiz did not go to Lahore.

He told me a delightful story about the big Lahore meeting which had been held to celebrate his birthday next time he came to London. In the evening, the police picked up most of the leading participants from their houses and dumped them in the Kot Lakhpat jail. As this distinguished crowd entered the precincts, a curious prisoner asked Shoaib Hashmi, Faiz's son-in-law, which political party they all belonged to. "The birthday party," Shoaib replied.

Faiz once said to me: "It is not that one has no fight left. It is only that one is not as young as one once was. It is difficult to take physical punishment when one is older. The spirit is willing, but the body is reluctant."

The intensity of his commitment to freedom and justice has grown rather than paled with time. In exile, it burns even brighter. He has always been a fighter, though everyone must fight after his own fashion. Revolutions ultimately

36. Abdullah Malik: Famous progressive writer and journalist from Lahore.

37. I.A. Rahman: distinguished Pakistani journalist. Now with *Viewpoint*.

38. Syed Wajid Ali: scion of one of Punjab's oldest Syed families. Gentleman of leisure and letters.

flow from ideas and few poets have advocated revolution with such passion and consistency as Faiz.

It is true that he is not the instant rhymester that many people who attack him, are. If the test of patriotism is writing *taranas* for Radio Pakistan, then Faiz is neither a poet nor a patriot. But who has written with more pain, love and hope about the elusive goddess of freedom than Faiz.

His great poem on the 1965 war *uttho ab mati se uttho*³⁹, remains one of the most moving works of its kind in literature. Those who attack Faiz for lack of patriotic feeling, are the same conscience sellers who were celebrating the great Islamic victories of Yahya Khan's tigers in East Pakistan in 1971, and who now sing Zia's praises. The sycophants who castigate him, are the same men who were dancing in the streets with roses in their buttonholes, celebrating Ayub's victory in the 1964 elections. And while they danced, Faiz transcribed his anguish in *kahin nahin hai, kahin bhi nahin laho ka suragh*⁴⁰.

I have no desire to write a defence of Faiz the man or poet. To me, his poetry is indistinguishable from the way he has lived his life. Perhaps, people like Dr Ayub Mirza do not understand this. In his book on Faiz *Hum ke tehre Aijnabi*, he wrote that Faiz was not really a revolutionary, but just a poet and were it not for some of his more committed friends who got him into trouble with successive governments, he would be quite happy just writing poetry. Dr Mirza, I am assured, is a great devotee of Faiz and, more than that, an excellent children's doctor. If I were him, I would continue to follow my noble profession and stay away from judgements on subjects I do not understand.

39. Raise your head from the dust, raise it now, my precious son.

40. Nowhere, but nowhere, is there sign of the blood that was shed.

Faiz on Faiz

I hate to talk about myself, because it is the occupation of bores. I wish to apologize for using this English word, but since we now seem to use even its derivatives, it should be considered part of everyday Urdu idiom.

Anyway, I was saying that I don't like to talk about myself in the first person singular. Even in my poetry, I have always employed the plural form "we", rather than its singular variation.

Often, when literary detectives ask me why I write, and how, or for what, I say the first thing which comes to me, just to silence their inquiring minds. Sometimes I say, "Well, why don't you read what I write and find the answers?"

However, there are some who refuse to take my innocent prevarications for an answer. As such, the responsibility for what follows, is entirely theirs.

I cannot think of any one reason why I began to write in the first place. Was it the poetry-conscious atmosphere of my boyhood, or the influence of my friends, or even the restlessness of youth? Frankly, I do not know.

The first part of *Naqsh-i-Faryadi*¹ consists of poems written between the years 1928-29 and 1934-35, when I was a student. Almost all these verses are a direct consequence of that certain mental and emotional experience which is common at that point of life. But there must have been some external factors also. It was an era constituted by two distinct and different currents. Between 1920 and 1930, there prevailed in India an atmosphere of social and economic detachment, tranquillity and emotional upsurge. While serious national and political movements were in full sway,

1. Faiz's first collection of poems

in literature, at least, there was a tendency to have a sort of "good time", instead of facing up to fundamental issues. In poetry, men like Hasrat Mohani, and later, Josh, Hafiz Jullandri and Akhtar Shirani, ran the show, as it were. Syed Sajjad Hyder Yildirim was the major short story writer and criticism was confined to the art for art's sake or art for life's sake debate. The early poems in my first collection date back to those years. I was still very young and discovering the first excitement of love.

However, while we were still trying to make sense of our times, suddenly everything came tumbling down. The depression descended upon the country. One found that high and lusty men one had known in college and looked up to, were now reduced to a life of economic uncertainty, looking for work which was not there. The smiles on the faces of children seemed to have vanished and farmers, abandoning their fields, had begun to move to the big cities in search of employment. Women who used to be confined to the four walls of the house, were now on the street. But the external situation notwithstanding, the same kind of lackadaisical poetry continued to be written. One felt the enormous impact of this contradiction and some of the poems in *Naqsh-i-Faryadi* are indicative of the emotional and intellectual confusion of those days.

I left college in 1934 and took a lecturership at the M.A.O. College, Amritsar, a year later. Here begins a new chapter in my intellectual and emotional life and in the lives of many of my contemporaries. I was reunited with my class-fellow, Sahibzada Mahmood-uz-Zafar and his wife, Rashid Jahan. Those were the years when the Progressive Writers' Movement was founded, and when workers began to organize themselves. It was a time of great creativity and the opening of new perspectives. I think the first lesson I learnt was that it was impossible to detach oneself from what was happening externally. An individual, no matter how rich and fulfilled emotionally and in intellectual terms, is, after all, only an individual, a small, humble entity of little

consequence. What matters is the world outside and the people in it and what happens to them. What is important is the larger human equation of pain and pleasure. As such, internal and external experiences are two sides of the same coin.

My next thirteen or fourteen years were spent in "owning up the sadness of the world outside", then after stints in the army, journalism and trade unions, I spent four years in jail. The two collections *Dast-i-Saba* and *Zindan Nama* are a tribute to my captivity. Confinement, like love, is a fundamental experience. It opens many new windows on the soul. The early sensations of youth return in an intensified form. One's curiosity returns, as does one's sense of wonder at such phenomena as the light of early morning, the fading evening twilight, the sheer blue of the sky, or the gentle touch of the wind. Time and the immediate world become one. What was near, appears to have reached into the distance and what was in the distance, moves in. A passing moment can become an eternity. Then there is also more time to refine what one has produced. My first years of captivity were years of wonder and the discovery of this sensibility I have spoken of. My later years were years of intellectual fatigue and boredom with that experience. The two collections contain poems reflecting both states of mind.

After *Zindan Nama*, I spent many years unable to focus my mind on things. I was forced to leave my profession of journalism, went to jail once again and was subjected to the experience of Martial Law. It is all reflected in poems written at the time and later.

Translated from Urdu by Khalid Hasan

A Conversation with Faiz

(Transcript of a conversation between the poet and Muzaffar Iqbal. Saskatoon, Canada, 4 June 1981)

Question: Our literary and political history is full of so many agitational and emotional movements. The tragedy is that they all begin with a tremendous momentum and gain such immediate and total domination that it seems as if nothing would stand in their way, but after some time, the momentum breaks and where there once was power and driving force, one only finds a vacuum and an emptiness. Take as examples the Quit India Movement or the Khilafat Movement.

In literature there has been one such movement—the Progressive Writers’—of which you were, of course, a founder. Beginning in 1936, it became in a year or so the most powerful literary movement of its time. So many famous names were associated with it. It appeared then that the future of millions of people of India lay in the success and acceptance of this movement. In less than a decade, schisms began to develop among its founders. By 1949, even you had dissociated yourself from it. So many sub-groups came to be formed in what was once a great body of opinion. Now that so much time has passed, how do you look at the Movement? What was its contribution to Urdu literature?

Faiz: First of all, it is not true that the Movement broke into many sub-groups, as you suggest. What was called the Progressive Writers’ Movement or the Progressive Writers’ Organization maintained a general sort of unity as long as it

remained focused on one objective at a certain given time and a given circumstance. There are two points one should bear in mind. The Movement or its organization came into existence at a time when the national independence movement was in full swing in our country. There was a specific objective in front of the people, namely, national independence, and on this point there was no difference of opinion.

The second point to remember is that there was no difference of opinion on the social priorities of those times. It was agreed that there was a need to portray the lives and problems of the class which had always been exploited and deprived of basic rights and comforts. It included white collar people in the cities, labourers and similarly neglected segments of society whose lives had never before been considered a fit subject for literature. There was an assumption and a hope that after independence, social injustice would be brought to an end.

Since there was agreement on these basic points, a movement came into existence. It was a united movement. With independence, the first objective was met. However, it was soon evident that true independence had yet to be achieved. Everyone had his own formula. There were different views on how best to reach the goal. So, in that sense, the Movement did suffer from schisms.

There were different views also on how to portray life and its problems realistically in literature. When there is intellectual confusion and lack of direction in a society, it has been observed that people either externalize the problem or do its complete reverse.

Some felt so disgusted at the prevailing uncertainty that they said: 'to hell with it all. Let us look inwards, and explore our unconscious'. This led to certain purely subjective movements. Their high point was that nothing was either intrinsically good or bad. The result was a kind of anarchism or nihilism or narcissism. I don't think you can blame the Progressive Movement for this development, because some writers have always looked forward, while

others have looked over their shoulder. In this sense, the Progressive Writers' Movement has always been there, since literature began.

This is the way it has always been. I believe that such vital literature as is being created today is based on, and flows from, the same values which the Progressive Writers' Movement epitomized. Before the Movement, there were other progressives—men like Sheikh Saadi and Iqbal.

It is quite another matter that so far we have not been able to decide upon a social structure for ourselves. Nor have we agreed upon our ultimate goal or upon how to reach it. Naturally, this has had an effect on literature. Nevertheless, I am of the view that much literature of vitality is being created, literature which is fundamentally consistent with life and progressive values. The escapist route is not being pursued, but genuine attempts are being made to find realistic and rational answers.

Question: I still feel that in its initial stages any movement has a clear vision, at least of fundamental matters, of what literature should be. But after a while differences arise. Among the Progressive take Manto and Ismat Chughtai and their detractors who dubbed them pornographers. Then there are the conflicting attitudes towards Iqbal. You had your differences with Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi on some of these matters. I would like to know whether they were differences of an organizational nature or differences fundamental to the Progressive Writers' Movement?

Faiz: No, the differences (with Qasmi) took place inside the Movement. When you associate a movement with an organization, there are bound to be some differences of opinion flowing from organizational decisions. So, when after independence, we found ourselves confronted with certain problems that had not existed before, it was but to be expected that there would be differences. Certain organizational decisions were taken which in the view of

some of us were not correct.

It also happens that some people tend to take an extreme view and, instead of looking at things from a realistic angle, they tend to become subjective. This can lead to narrow interpretations and shortsightedness. There was always this thing about Manto and Ismat. Some critics even went on to generalise that all progressive writers were pornographers. The fact is that progressivism has nothing to do with pornography or permissive writing. Basically, neither Manto nor Ismat wrote pornography. It is true, though, that their style of writing and some of their themes could sometimes be misunderstood as pornography. I too had my views on the subject, but as far as their integrity and their commitment to realism were concerned, they were above reproach. However since, because of these two, attempts were made to dub the entire Movement pornographic, there were some among us who took a rather extreme position. It was said that Manto and Ismat had nothing to do with the Movement. This is something I disagreed with then, and I disagree with now. However, such differences within a movement are neither new nor unusual.

Question: But in 1949, you parted company with the Movement, while. . .

Faiz: No, I did not part company in the manner that is being suggested. It was like this: for the sake of the movement itself, one chose to keep quiet about things one did not agree with. At the time, certain misinterpretations were made with regard to Iqbal. Also, in my view, the attitude adopted towards Manto, Ismat, Qurratulain Hyder and N.M. Raashid was wrong. I never dissociated myself from the Movement because there was nothing wrong with it as such.

Question: Let's turn to your poetry. In Urdu prose there have been some epoch-making events such as the publication of Abdullah Hussain's novel, *Udas Naslen*. But in Urdu

poetry, one can't think of a similar event, except when your collection of poems, *Dast-i-Saba*, was published in 1952. How did it affect you? You were in prison at the time. Did this "event" condition your subsequent poetry, did it create the problem of maintaining standards? Suddenly, your name was echoing everywhere. How did you take it?

Faiz: Well, as far as my "name" goes, when my first collection, *Naqsh-i-Faryadi*, was published, it seemed to me that I had arrived. I was, of course, somewhat surprised at the happy reception of the book. After all, what had I done? Written some verse. But behind *Dast-i-Saba* lay a new experience—that of captivity. People identified themselves with it because of the new situation in the country. They perhaps felt the events of the day and the forces behind them as portrayed in the book. To me, it did not really make any difference. Nor was it anything new, because people have always been kind to me.

But popular reaction does not affect one's poetry or change its direction. One always writes about what one has undergone and experienced. *Dast-i-Saba* is nothing more than a mirror of my feelings at the time. It has always been so with me.

It is a question of what one feels. When one feels a particular emotional impact of things in personal terms, one tries to empathize with others, with events outside oneself. So, one never changes one's course or one's attitude. Nor does one allow oneself to become a prisoner of this or that.

Question: The image of the morning is basic to your poetry. The purity of daybreak, its resplendent light. It is like a dream. You belong to a generation which saw dreams, which worked for their fulfilment, as in the freedom movement. You were travellers through a long night. When we look back, we feel that your generation travelled from one stretch of darkness to another stretch of darkness. In between, there were dreams of morning, but no shaft of light to penetrate the gloom.

There have been two consequences of this great betrayal of the dreams of your generation. Either complete escape from reality or bitterness and disillusionment. Your greatness lies in the fact that you have avoided both these extremes. Though there is an underlying melancholy in your poetry, you have retained inner resistance and resilience in your music. In fact, with time, these two elements have deepened. How have you managed to do this?

Faiz: First of all, I do not think that the dream is shattered. The poet Mir said that death itself is no more than a pause, a point of reference from which one moves on. There is always the nation and the country.

Secondly, to keep a dream alive, hope is essential. This is instinctive in me.

Realism too required that, while one should not deny the presence of despair, one should, at the same time, keep faith and hope intact.

Question: This seems a good way of saving oneself from disillusionment, but some writers of your generation became either introverts or screaming propagandists. Have you never experienced this divide? Or do you manage to somehow avoid it consciously?

Faiz: There is no real dichotomy between the conscious and the unconscious. One's unconscious is always involved in whatever one does consciously. Of course, there is a kind of struggle between the conscious and the unconscious. Perhaps, unconsciously, I too would like to scream out: let's give it all up and sit at home and intone God's name. But then I do not do that. Depends on how much fight you have in you. So, I suppose, the fact that one goes on is due to many factors: a bit of faith, a bit of the inner light, a bit of it from the outside, and then friendships. You move with the people, with the caravan, as it were, and you are not unhappy or sad.

Question: Your poetry is like one long struggle. But it does not violate the norms of the classical tradition. How do you

reconcile writing about the problems of today with the old classical modes?

Faiz: What old modes! To me the old and the new, the traditional and the contemporary fall in their proper places in the larger composite tradition of literature. The great advantage—or miracle—of the *ghazal* form, for example, is that you can use it to render traditional themes in traditional diction and still be in tune with contemporary reality. The traditional struggle between the mystic and the sermonising priest is also a contemporary humanistic struggle between authority and the ordinary man.

Question: Your life—I mean your poetic life—was influenced by the fact that you were jailed twice. Did it in any way limit the canvas of your poetry?

Faiz: No, quite the contrary. Imprisonment brings in a new dimension, a new way in which you look at things. Objects one had not even noticed in normal life, because one was too busy to perceive their ugliness or beauty, appear anew. One's sensitivity is heightened. Then you have much more time in prison. You can look at the world and think about it at leisure. It was in jail that I wrote my poem on Africa and on many other subjects, which I would not have normally thought about. So, in that sense, when you are in jail, the world outside comes closer—or recedes into the distance. Ironically, imprisonment brings freedom in that sense. I feel that the kind of intellectual freedom you experience in jail, you don't experience outside. When you are outside, you are caught up in day-to-day affairs. You never see the entire canvas. Imprisonment opens the windows of your mind.

Question: A personal question now. Those who are close to you know that your relationship with Alys is not a mere husband-wife relationship, but a long and deep friendship. However, you come from a certain background, with a certain cultural psyche, nurtured over hundreds of years. Don't you sometimes feel (because of the difference in your two ..

backgrounds) that there is a communication gap, that there are things she is not able to grasp or things you are not able to grasp?

Faiz: Yes, one does have that feeling, often, many times, but I think . . . after all, it is forty years. . . . And well, then there are the children. They are there and they are part of the circle of our life together, as much as we two are. We react to our children and they react to us and it so happens that at a certain point distances converge into proximity. They cease to exist. Still, something does remain. Our purely Eastern things, for instance. She does not always understand them, but in forty years, I suppose, she has learnt so much that. . . .

Question: Yes, I see. I have a friend. Salimur Rahman. Teaches economics. He often says that in the end all things become one because of a common denominator. But in the beginning, when you were just married. Did you have a feeling that there was a gap?

Faiz: One did not marry in a day. We knew each other for two or three years. And because she had a certain political mind, and because we had ideological affinity with each other, when we met in Amritsar, where she had come to see her sister, we spent a lot of time together. We felt it would work that we could, make a go of it. So we decided to get married. So, you see it was not a matter of love at first sight.

Question: In your last book *Mere Dil Mere Musafir*, one detects a certain quality, a feeling. It is so different from your other books. It reads like poetry of exile. A feeling of being away from your country, in a physical sense, I mean. Has it brought a new dimension, a new feeling, to your poetry? Are you now part of the international community of exiled poets like Nazim Hikmat and Mahmood Dervesh?

Faiz: In one sense, yes; in another, no. What I have in common with them is physical separation from the homeland. But the difference is that they were forcibly evicted. I was wandering about of my own free will. Nobody

has ordered me to leave. I can return whenever fancy takes me. Of course, there is always the sadness of separation from one's homeland, like the sadness of separation from one's beloved. But the helplessness of those two is something quite different. I am not helpless in that way. I will go whenever I so wish.

Question: But you wrote recently: "And so it has been ordained that we be banished".

Faiz: Yes, that is true but not literally. I was not ordered to leave. I saw that things were not quite right, so I thought I would take a holiday from the situation. But my situation is different from Hikmat and Dervesh. I am not deprived in the sense in which they are. I can always go home. No one has stopped me. I have the choice. But Mahmood Dervesh and the Palestinian people have not only been individually but collectively banished from their homeland. Their anguish is greater than mine. Nazim Hikmat was sentenced for fourteen years and had to escape. They cannot go back home. But I am still confident that there are many back home whose love and affection I have. However, the anguish of separation from one's loved ones is not lessened by this awareness. It is there.

Question: You have been abroad by an act of volition, as it were, for the last three years. Are there things you now see from a different perspective? When you place an object very close to your eye, you cannot see it. It becomes hazy. Has distance changed your views?

Faiz: Yes, it is true. From a distance one can see things more objectively, more clearly; but in a personal sense, one is not really involved in what the people back there are going through. So, in a way, your burden is lighter. Were one back home, it would be different.

Question: Your poetic diction, your similes, your metaphors are purely classical, and are part of our traditional poetry.

backgrounds) that there is a communication gap, that there are things she is not able to grasp or things you are not able to grasp?

Faiz: Yes, one does have that feeling, often, many times, but I think . . . after all, it is forty years. . . . And well, then there are the children. They are there and they are part of the circle of our life together, as much as we two are. We react to our children and they react to us and it so happens that at a certain point distances converge into proximity. They cease to exist. Still, something does remain. Our purely Eastern things, for instance. She does not always understand them, but in forty years, I suppose, she has learnt so much that. . . .

Question: Yes, I see. I have a friend. Salimur Rahman. Teaches economics. He often says that in the end all things become one because of a common denominator. But in the beginning, when you were just married. Did you have a feeling that there was a gap?

Faiz: One did not marry in a day. We knew each other for two or three years. And because she had a certain political mind, and because we had ideological affinity with each other, when we met in Amritsar, where she had come to see her sister, we spent a lot of time together. We felt it would work that we could, make a go of it. So we decided to get married. So, you see it was not a matter of love at first sight.

Question: In your last book *Mere Dil Mere Musafir*, one detects a certain quality, a feeling. It is so different from your other books. It reads like poetry of exile. A feeling of being away from your country, in a physical sense, I mean. Has it brought a new dimension, a new feeling, to your poetry? Are you now part of the international community of exiled poets like Nazim Hikmat and Mahmood Dervesh?

Faiz: In one sense, yes; in another, no. What I have in common with them is physical separation from the homeland. But the difference is that they were forcibly evicted. I was wandering about of my own free will. Nobody

has ordered me to leave. I can return whenever fancy takes me. Of course, there is always the sadness of separation from one's homeland, like the sadness of separation from one's beloved. But the helplessness of those two is something quite different. I am not helpless in that way. I will go whenever I so wish.

Question: But you wrote recently: "And so it has been ordained that we be banished".

Faiz: Yes, that is true but not literally. I was not ordered to leave. I saw that things were not quite right, so I thought I would take a holiday from the situation. But my situation is different from Hikmat and Dervesh. I am not deprived in the sense in which they are. I can always go home. No one has stopped me. I have the choice. But Mahmood Dervesh and the Palestinian people have not only been individually but collectively banished from their homeland. Their anguish is greater than mine. Nazim Hikmat was sentenced for fourteen years and had to escape. They cannot go back home. But I am still confident that there are many back home whose love and affection I have. However, the anguish of separation from one's loved ones is not lessened by this awareness. It is there.

Question: You have been abroad by an act of volition, as it were, for the last three years. Are there things you now see from a different perspective? When you place an object very close to your eye, you cannot see it. It becomes hazy. Has distance changed your views?

Faiz: Yes, it is true. From a distance one can see things more objectively, more clearly; but in a personal sense, one is not really involved in what the people back there are going through. So, in a way, your burden is lighter. Were one back home, it would be different.

Question: Your poetic diction, your similes, your metaphors are purely classical, and are part of our traditional poetry.

But you invest classical diction with a new meaning. Have you never thought of using a new language, a new diction, a new idiom, as some people do these days? Have you never felt the need to do so?

Faiz: In every language—and that includes Urdu and Urdu poetry—there are certain limitations, certain internal parameters. Within this limited framework, there has always been innovation. Mir, Sauda, Nazir Akbarabadi, Ghalib and Iqbal made innovations, changed the idiom, changed the grammar, changed the imagery. But to go beyond that point, well, one would require a much greater talent.

One must see that the distinction between prose and poetry is maintained. Poetry involves bringing things together. Prose involves scattering them. Poetry is a discipline. One has to abide by some discipline. Poetry is in higher planes, prose is one flatland. So, one has to maintain the difference and still say something new. There is no simple formula. One has one's temperament and one's inspirations. I feel that what our tradition has given us, we have not made full use of. There is much that remains to be done. We have not really tried to do so. Our generation has distanced itself from tradition, we do not attempt to discover this apart, what lies hidden in that tradition. To blaze a new trail, one needs the distinctive manner and style of a very great poet. I am not invested with such greatness. Sometimes, when I cannot say it in Urdu, I try to write in Punjabi, as I have done.

Question: This new Urdu poetry. Are these new poets not overly influenced by the west?

Faiz: Yes, obviously. This began with us as far back as Maulana Hali and Maulana Mohammad Hussain Azad. The poetry they produced in imitation of the west, by abandoning their own tradition, is of no consequence at all. It has no native blood. It is imitation, and imitation is not creative. This does not mean that one should not benefit from poetry written elsewhere. It does not mean that we

should not look for new structures in accordance with changed times. We must. The only thing we have to watch for is that we choose forms which integrate with our tradition. The patch must fit and suit the quilt.

Poetry is not merely a matter of expressing feelings and emotions. It is like the craft of an artisan. A craft one must know. It is like a musical composition. One has to see if and where a note fits. A plant must have its roots in the soil. A rootless plant cannot flourish. Similarly, the roots of tradition must be kept intact. However, in accordance with changed circumstances, one must continue to prune the plant. It should be recognizable in the contemporary context. So, there are two things: continuity and renovation. Tradition and experiment. There is no laid-down formula or recipe.

Every poet must find his own answers. If you know what you are doing, you will hit the right balance. Take some of our prose poets. Normally, they give up in about four years and come back to traditional poetry. I have never tried this rigmarole. Perhaps, a few times, come to think of it. However, I have tried to stay within the framework of tradition and tried innovations where I could. As in religion, there is freedom to interpret the revealed word in accordance with the needs of the age; so it is in poetry. But while interpretation aimed at tailoring things to contemporary reality is allowed, heresy is not.

Question: Some Latin American poets are close to your way of thinking. Do you think poetry can affect the international situation? Does it affect people?

Faiz: Well, to tell the truth, I have not had much to do with poetry written outside, other than English poetry. And English poetry has little to do with our conditions. But in some other parts of the world, it is different. We share their experience and their stress. Our conditions are similar. Many voices you hear from those regions resemble ours. They can learn from us and we can learn from them. But this has only

happened to me in the last ten or twenty years. Instead of French, English and German poetry, I have established an empathy with Latin American, Spanish—and more recently—Palestinian and Arabic poetry. And, of course, African poetry. Those people have undergone the same experiences as ours. This is good. We can learn more from them. We can learn from the literature of the societies with which we have cultural and political similarities, compared to countries with which we have little to share.

Question: Garcia Marquez's novel "The Time of the Patriarch" reads like a story which could have happened in our own country. The same repression, the same incidents, the same use of force. So when things like this are translated, they create an effect. What has been the impact of your translations in other languages?

Faiz: Translations are of great benefit. We have translations of literature in our country from Arabic. I have translated some poetry from Turkish, some of Nazim Hikmat's. Now Palestinian literature is being translated. All this helps people to understand their own environment and their own lives. It gives them a new vision. So, in a sense, it all adds to the enlargement of the realm of literature.

Question: A word about poetry today. What do you think of your contemporaries or of those who will follow you?

Faiz: I believe that in spite of the mental confusion and emotional restlessness which prevails today, a great deal of good poetry is being written. It is always difficult to make predictions about youth, because one can never tell how many of those who are writing today will eventually give up. However, it proves that those who say that there is a lack of literary creation are wrong. There are plenty of new writers: poets, critics, and writers of prose. In every branch of literature, much that is new is being produced. There is movement, but it is nothing comparable to what things were like during the Progressive Writers' Movement. So let us say

no movement as such has been born yet, but there are signs and waves. Therefore, there is no need to worry about literature. Leave Urdu. There is Punjabi, Baluchi, Sindhi and Pushto. For the first time, people are paying attention to these languages. Vibrant poetry is being written in them. Prose writers are beginning to make their mark, and the caravan of literature is moving on.

Question: In poetry there is always the question of who influenced whom. Is a poet of your stature, who is influencing an entire literature, part of a continuity? Or does he act as an inhibiting influence on new writers who find it difficult to discover a new means of expression?

Faiz: Yes, a poet may influence other poets, but, more important, objective conditions also create a new idiom, a certain kind of grammar, a particular form of expression. The poet who becomes the first to employ these innovations becomes a stylist—at a particular time, that is. Then, poets borrow from other poets. Even today, we continue to borrow from Mir and Ghalib so it is a natural process. People borrow from other people and benefit from what others have done. There is nothing wrong with that. It is only natural. It has always been so. And if someone sits down and tells himself that he is going to write in the manner of Josh or Qasmi, or even Faiz, then it is his problem and no blame lies on us. Good writers discover their own path. They pick out from others what they find good, as I take from Ghalib or someone takes from Josh or from Qasmi. It is but natural.

Question: People of your generation had a dream. They were part of a struggle, a movement. Then the dream was shattered, although you say it has not been shattered. You say it was only an interregnum. However, the generation which followed yours doesn't see it quite that way. Those who were born after partition, or who were four or five years old at the time, see a different reality. They see what the politicians have done and what has happened to the country

internationally and at home. One doesn't quite see how it is an interregnum. There is poetry of frustration, protest and anger being produced. How do you see it?

Faiz: I do not think it is right to generalize. Good poetry is good poetry, no matter when it is written. Good poetry of today has all the qualities, realism and protest and hope and faith. Since there appears to be no movement in the offing, every individual is discovering his own path to salvation which is good. I have never thought that I have done something which the younger generation is incapable of doing. Those who have talent will one day distinguish themselves, just like people in earlier generations did.

Question: And now a cliché. How do you write?

Faiz: How does one write? I do not really know how one writes. Sometimes while reading a book, a phrase or a sentence or an image or a rhyme sticks in the mind and, ultimately, ends up in a poem. At times, while listening to music, a certain note or a certain rhythmic pattern leaves a deep impression. Suddenly a line comes to mind. A *ghazal* first requires the emergence of a rhyming scheme in one's consciousness. One builds on it. For a *nazm*, one has to think. A line comes first and then you think of the pattern of the poem. It is like an artisan at work. It has to be built. You have to get it in focus. The basic image must be in sharp focus. You have to match things. The music has to be right. No false notes. At time, the experience of a certain event is so sudden and intense that the entire poem is born immediately. At other times, it can take months.

Question: Did you ever want to write something major and were unable to do so?

Faiz: Once or twice, I tried to write a long poem. I wanted to make the dedication to the collection, *Sar-i-Wadi-Sina*, into a long poem, but then I got bored writing it. Another poem in *Dast-i-Saba*—A Prison Morning—I thought of making into a long poem, but then I gave up.

Translated from Urdu by Khalid Hasan

The Unicorn and the Dancing Girl

*In Pakistan as elsewhere in Asia
and Africa time past is time present
And in the past – the past
which neither man nor history remembers –
there was no time.
Only timelessness.
The timelessness of the city of the dead
And of the graves of nameless saints
with their tattered flags
which never rallied anyone to any cause
And their earthen lamps which shed no
light on the mysteries of human darkness.
The timelessness of the unicorn
Presiding over pots and pans
over weapons and vanities
of the city of the dead
who is not even a unicorn
is not even a legend
For even a legend is a memory
And the memory is in time
But the past is timeless
like the eternal snows of
Timeless mountains
The eternal sands
of timeless deserts
And the waters
of the timeless sea*

In the 1960s Faiz wrote this script in blank verse for a short documentary on Mohenjodaro. It was never produced.

*And written within this eternity of silence
The music of time began
in the leap of a lonely spring
out of the encrusted womb of a wilderness of rocks
The joyous limbs of the dancing girl
defying the motionless unicorn
And dancing waters on their festival
march to the sea.
Thus time was born
And cities arose on the plains
attracting an unending caravan
of human feet marching in and
out of the timeless mountains
Parthians, Bactrians, Huns and Scythians,
Arabs, Tartars, Turks, and White Men.
But as time unwound its first
thread
The unicorn which is the past
grabbed it in its blind hoofs
And spun it round and imprisoned it within itself.
And time became
The endless drone of the waterwheel
The creaking of the wooden cart
The hum of the spinning wheel
The closed spectrum of light and shadow
The heat and cold of the seasons.
Although men matched their strength
against the wheel
to fight and to create
much that was good and beautiful*

Buildings

Gardens

Paintings

Carpets

Ornaments

Music

**But everything moved within
its own remorseless orbit**

**Even the dance of the dancing girl
imprisoned within the circular whirl
of her own limbs
and the gaze of eager eyes in a close-set circle.
For the wheel was fate
and custom**

**And the will of the unknown powers
which predestined all beauty
To death and decay after its span
and mighty cities to dust.**

**And small men gave up
the fight**

**And accepted the yoke
to circumambulate their
allotted round of days
like blindfold oxen.**

And the wheel was fate

And the yoke was 'karma'

And fear and want and pain

And withering of age

And death with its mercy

And the tyrant with no mercy in his heart.

*Until the present
And then the striving and the strain
The sorrows and dreams and passions and yearnings
of numberless beings
over untold centuries
snapped the yoke
and broke the wheel
to unleash an orgy of frenzied movement
The wheel clanking away on steel tracks
speeding on metalled roads
whirling on airfields
in giant factories
Explosives ripping up the timeless
mountains to release power
Earthmovers ploughing through timeless sands to
admit water
men and women
boys and girls
unyoked from fate and 'karma', and
Custom and the dream of an unknown will
The joyousness of the dancing girl
rippling in abandon through the young flesh
of countless limbs
And the unicorn reduced
at last to a mere design on a fabric
A mere decoration on the wall.
And yet
Time present is still time past
in faces
in places
in custom and ritual and the grave of the nameless saint*

*In hunger and want and pain and the withering of age
The birth of time out of timelessness
is beset like all births
with travail, and hope, and joy and apprehension.
And its birth in Pakistan as elsewhere in
the newly liberated countries of Asia
and Africa
is as yet only a small flag of freedom
raised against
The bannered and embattled host of
Fear and want and hunger and
Pain
And the death of human hearts.*

Attic

for
Faiz Ahmed Faiz
on his 73rd birthday

Remembrance
of dead friends –
a maze of stars –
vineyard sloping down
to a murderous sea.

Spring
is a latticed window –
a young woman beneath
a waterfall – flowers at
the foot of the gallows.

Desecration
of all that we loved –
lewdness in the marketplace –
all stand condemned:
the guilty as well as the innocent.

Daud Kamal

Ascent

*On the death of
Faiz Ahmed Faiz*

Ancient gardens
in your eyes
and the falling snow.
We had not broken camp -
Our horses
were at pasture -
unsaddled.
Restless traveller!

Again exiled?
The valleys unfold
themselves for you.
Birdsongs. Jewelled grace
of November leaves.
Intercede for us -
river-forgotten
magnetic stones.

Daud Kamal

Do Not Grieve

Do not grieve.

Do not grieve.

This pain will cease.

Friends will return.

Wounds will heal.

Do not grieve.

Do not grieve.

Day will dawn.

Night will end.

Clouds will burst.

Do not grieve.

Do not grieve.

Times will change.

Birds will sing.

Spring will come.

Do not grieve.

Do not grieve.

Paris

The day declines.
The streets and fashionable shopping centres
Are lit up
By symmetrical rows of yellow-faced lamps.
And from their begging bowls
Pour in rich profusion
The never-ending futilities
Of this bustling metropolis.
Far away
Against the backdrop of the sky
The dim profile of departed grandeur.
Two intertwined shadows
In the shadow of a wall
Each sustaining the other
With the illusion of hope.
A common, everyday sight.
And, then, a stranger
Muttering a long prologue to a commentary
On the callousness of the age –
Avoiding both the puddles of light
And the lurking shadows –
Goes cautiously
In the direction of his dreamless room.

पेरिस

दिन ढला, कूचा-ओ-बाज़ार में सफ़-बस्ता हुई
जर्द-रू-रौशनियाँ
उनमें हर एक के कश्कोल से बरसीं रिम-झिम
इस भरे शहर की न आसूदगियां
दूर पसे-मंज़रे-अफ़लाक में धुँधलाने लगे
अज़मत-ए-रफ़ता के निशाँ
पेश-मंज़र में
किसी साया-ए-दीवार से लिपटा हुआ साया कोई
दूसरे साये की मौहूम-सी उम्मीद लिए
रोज़ मर्रा की तरह
ज़ेरे-लब
शरह-ए-बेददी-ए-अय्याम की तमहीद लिए
और कोई अजनबी
इन रौशनियों, सायों से कतराता हुआ
अपने बेहूयाब शबिस्ताँ की तरफ जाता हुआ

The Gamble of Love

Defeated but undismayed
He makes his exit
Having lost both the worlds
In the desperate gamble of love.

The tavern is desolate
And the empty goblets dry
As the whirling dust.
Spring mourns your going.

One brief interlude
Of forbidden pleasure.
Don't preach to me about
The infinite mercy of God.

Life has alienated me
From the memory of your love.
More enticing than you
Is the suffering of this world.

You smiled at me today
In such a manner
That my dying heart
Once again blossomed into life.

Evening, Be Kind!

Evening, be kind.
Evening of the city of beloved friends.
Be kind to us.
Past is the hellish noon of tyranny.
Senseless tyranny.
The noon of pain, rage and grief.
Inarticulate pain, rage and grief.
The noon's whiplashes
have marked my body
with a thousand broken crescents.
All the wounds have reopened
and I had thought that the bruises
must have disappeared.
Surely there must be something left
in the golden tray of your munificence.
Perhaps a shawl that can soothe.
If there is, spread it on that part of the body
where it hurts the most.
Evening, be kind.
Evening of the city of beloved friends.
Be kind to us.
We have passed through the hellish wilderness of hatreds.
Relentless hatreds.
We have been pierced by the glass-sharpness of envious eyes
and have struggled through the flotsam and jetsam of
complaints.
The streets are all deserted
while the places of execution are thick with people.

But we have come through -
every footstep a blister -
our feet cut and bleeding.
All the paths have shrunk.
Spread the velvet of your clouds under our aching feet.
Cure our journey's agony.
Evening, be kind.
Evening, blossoming into resplendent night, be kind.
Comforter of wounded hearts.
Evening, plead for us.
Evening, be kind.
Evening, be kind.
Evening of the city of beloved friends.
Be kind to us.

Wash the Blood

What should I have done?
Where should I have gone?
All the paths were
Strewn with thorns.
Those intense loves –
Age-old friendships
All destroyed
One by one.
Wherever I went
Whichever direction I took
My feet bled white
And all those who saw
Cried out :
Why do you harp on
The same old theme
That sincerity is dead.
Wash the blood off your feet.
When these paths are erased
By the dust
Hundreds of new ways
Will appear.
Hold firmly to your heart –
Hundreds of arrows
Will break in it.

What Should We Do

**Countless yearnings
Petrified
In your eyes and mine –
Lacerated hearts
Writhing
In your body and mine.
Numb fingers.
Paralysed pens.
And the minds
Frost-bitten.
Entombed in every street
Of our beloved city
Your footprints and mine.
The stars of our night
Are open wounds
And our morning roses
Torn petals –
Ruptured retinas –
Buffeted by a dark wind.
All our afflictions
Are incurable.
All our gashes
Beyond repair.**

On some
There are the ashes
Of the moon
And on others
The blood
Of the morning dew.
Is it real ?
Is it hallucination ?
Is it merely the spiderweb
Of your superstitions and mine ?
If it is real
What should we do ?
And even if it isn't
What should we do ?
Sharpen the edge of my mind.
Make me understand.
Tell me!

Nimbus

What is now
The emblem of authority
In the imperial court -
The bejewelled staff
Of the chamberlain
Or the author's clotted pen ?
The prophetic voice
Lost in the mountains -
Is it the prologue
To happiness
Or an extension of this
Night of grief ?
Street urchins are playing
With a rag -

Is it the remnant
Of my torn cloak
Or the banner
Of dead freedom fighters ?
The walls of the city
Are illumined -
Is it the reflection
Of martyrs' blood
Or that of
Jamshaid's glittering gold ?
Let us keep vigil
Around this dying flame
Like a halo.
There is still
Some light left
Little though it is.

The Curve of Memory

Last night
When
I thought
Of you
All the deserts
Became
Fragrant
With zephyrs.
Spring
Was everywhere
And
My dying heart
Suddenly
Came back
To life.

Elysium
(a quatrain in Punjabi)

I have drunk
the cascading wine
of your beauty.
I have embraced
the night's curvature.

I have seen
the moonlight writhe
in the curls of your hair
and you in the net
of my kisses.

I have swayed with the sea.

Day And Night

Darkness is a net
And light a spear.
The day is a hunter
And so is the night.
This world is a dangerous sea
And in it
Far from the shore
Live human beings
In fear
Like the fish.

This world is a dangerous sea
And standing on the shore
Are the fishermen
Some with nets
Others with spears.
Who knows
When my turn will come.
Will I be hunted
With the spears of day
Or captured
With the nets of night?

Captivity

So what
if pen and paper
have been snatched from my hands?

I have
dipped my fingers
in the blood of my heart

So what
if they have
sealed my lips?

I have threaded
with a tongue
every link of my chains

The Morning of Freedom

August 1947

This stained light, this night-bitten dawn –
This is not the dawn we yearned for.
This is not the dawn for which we set out
Hoping that in the sky's wilderness
We would reach the final destination of the stars.
Surely, the night's turgid sea will breathe its last
On the inevitable shore.
Surely, the boat of the heart's agony will somewhere
Come to a stop.
The enigma of youthful blood – seductive hands –
So many forsaken loves – plaintive looks.
But irresistible was the radiant face of the dawn
Even though love and beauty were within our reach.
The subtle sorcery of desire – the aching tiredness.
They say that darkness has been severed from light.
They say that the goal has been reached.
But the predicament of the grief-stricken
Has radically changed –
Ecstasy of union is allowed
And the torment of separation forbidden.
Torn nerves, glazed eyes, heart on fire –
There is no cure for the disease of separation.
From where did the morning breeze come
And where did it go ?
The earthen lamp shrugs its head in despair.
The night is as oppressive as ever.
The time for the liberation of heart and mind
Has not come as yet.
Continue your arduous journey.
This is not your destination.

The Last Letter

One day - my love -
in the not too distant future
my useless life
will come to an end -
the tumour of despair,
festering for so long,
will finally erupt
and my parched eyes
will crumble into dust.
My tears and my sighs
will be snatched from me
and my frustrated youth
utterly destroyed.
You may mourn my death
and plunge into remorse.
You may even weep
and place on my grave
the flowers of spring.

Or you may
scrape the mud off your shoes
on my tombstone
and laugh merrily
at my stupid-seeming devotion.
But whether you laugh or cry
or simply stand confused,
not knowing what to think
what to feel,
I shall not move -
under tons of earth -
I shall not move.

This is the Moment to Mourn Time

The sky's rivulet has come to a standstill.
Look, the moon's sad-coloured boat
Has reached the horizon's edge.
All the star-mariners have stepped ashore.
Leaves are gasping for breath
And all the winds are fast asleep.
An imperious clock commands silence
And all sounds have suddenly stopped.
The shawl of night has slipped
From the white breasts of dawn.
She is now covered by rags of loneliness.
And, strangely enough, she does not know.
In fact, no one knows.
People leave the town as the day dwindles.
They have no idea where they wish to go.
There is neither a path nor any destination.
Travellers are in no mood for travelling.
This moment is a broken link
In the chain of elusive day and night.
This is the moment to mourn time.

Whenever this moment comes
I take off the garment of self
And see blots of remorse and love's embroidery.
I see runnels of tears, blood-stains, claw-tracks
And glowing imprints of gracious friends.
The ruby-lips of beloved friends
And also the spit of enemies.
This robe of day and night
Is both dear and hateful to me.
Sometimes in a passion
I want to tear it to shreds
And at other times
I want to kiss it
And put it on again.

Remembrance

Love,
In this desert of solitude
Quivers the shadow of your voice
And now and then trembles
Before me
The mirage of your lips.
Look there
In the midst of thorn-bushes
Bloom the rose and jasmine
Of your beauty.

Love,
From somewhere very close -
Closer than I am to myself -
Rises the warmth of your breath
Smouldering in its own fragrance.
And far away - beyond the horizon -
Softly descends
The sparkling dew of your loving eyes.

Love,
Your memory puts me in such a trance
That I am deluded into believing
That there never was any separation
And that the night of union
Is already here
Even though the dreary morning
Has just begun.

A Nocturnal Rhapsody

Midnight, moon, self-forgetfulness.
Sterile embrace of
What was with what is.
Silence sculpts itself
Into the marble goddess of yearning.
And the stars are brilliant with grief.
Cascading stillness - forests of oblivion.
Life is but the fragment of a forgotten dream
And this variegated world
No more than a mirage.
Look, the tired voice of moonlight
Is curling up to sleep
In the thick foliage of trees.
Listen, the milky way is narrating
Incredible tales of love
To half-awakened eyes -
Scheherazade desperate to stay alive.
I plunge into the mirror-whirlpool
Of the heart
To rediscover hope, vision, your dazzling beauty.

A Nocturnal Rhapsody

Midnight, moon, self-forgetfulness.
Sterile embrace of
What was with what is.
Silence sculpts itself
Into the marble goddess of yearning.
And the stars are brilliant with grief.
Cascading stillness - forests of oblivion.
Life is but the fragment of a forgotten dream
And this variegated world
No more than a mirage.
Look, the tired voice of moonlight
Is curling up to sleep
In the thick foliage of trees.
Listen, the milky way is narrating
Incredible tales of love
To half-awakened eyes -
Scheherazade desperate to stay alive.
I plunge into the mirror-whirlpool
Of the heart
To rediscover hope, vision, your dazzling beauty.

What Will Be, Will Be

Why talk now about that day
When the heart will be broken into pieces
And all sorrows will be wiped out.
What has been found will be lost
And what has not been attained
Will be attained.

This really is the first day of love
For which we have always yearned
And of which we were always afraid.
This day has been hundreds of times
Plundered and then recompensed.

Why worry now about that day
When the heart will be broken into pieces
And all sorrows will be wiped out.

Throw away all doubts and fears.
What will come, will come.
If there is laughter, we will laugh.
If there is weeping, we will weep.
Do what you have to do
And let the future take care of itself.

You Think....

You think
cruelty will teach
the custom of faithfulness
and idols point out
the path to God.

No, it does not happen like this.

You think
by counting the corpses
of all those murdered aspirations
you will be able
to calculate the blood-money.

No, it does not happen like this.

Neither ingenuity
nor wishes
are of any use
in the world of the heart.

Vows of requittal and submission....

No, it does not happen like this.

True
sometimes every night
every moment seems like doomsday
but every morning does not bring
the day of judgment.

No, it does not happen like this.

Feel the pulse
of the present and look
at all those revolving skies.

You think
the future is in your hands.

No, it does not happen like this.

The Flowers Have All Withered

**The flowers have all withered.
The tears of the sky will not stop.
The lamps are without light.
The mirrors are shattered.
The music is dead.
The dance is over.
And far beyond those clouds
Is the darling of this night –
The star of pain.
It glimmers
rattles
smiles.**

A Lover to His Beloved

Be not surprised
if in the wilderness of memory
the morning breeze turns into a rose.

Be not surprised
if in a niche of past life
a forgotten pain turns into a lamp.

Even if it is like a chance encounter
let us meet for a few moments
face to face.

I know that after we have met
my feeling of loss
will be greater than it is now.

I will not remind you
of any promises
nor you, me.

Eyelashes cannot wash away
the writing in the dust
of our past.

If you are in a receptive mood
listen
and if not, don't.

If you can't look
into my eyes,
turn away your face.

If you want to speak
speak
and if not, don't.

The Moment of Ultimate Betrayal

In a little while
The moon will be ravaged
On every rooftop.
Images will vanish
And mirrors will be thirsty.
From the eyes of heaven
Tears will fall -
Stars soaked up by the dust.
In their desolate rooms
Some will wrap themselves up
In loneliness -
Others will sprawl in despair.
That will be the moment
Of ultimate betrayal
When all kindnesses will come
To an end
And everyone will be for himself.
Where will you go, then, my roving heart?
Who will befriend you?

Wait a little longer.
Wait till the arrow of dawn
Restores vision to the blind.
Wait for the intimate faces.
Wait for the morning.

The Leningrad Cemetery

On cold granite slabs
A sprinkling of flowers
Reminiscent of blood.
There are no names
On the headstones
But every petal is engraved
With its own parable.

The young heroes sleep
Transfigured to the roots
Of their hair.
Only mother is awake –
Massive, with her rosary of stars.
The sky bows down with her.
She is the sky.

Why Pray For Eternal Life?

**I have embellished my verses
With all that you have ever said to me.**

**From you I got all the metaphors
Of colour and fragrance, of beauty and goodness.**

**Yes, there was an excuse for living
Even before I met and loved you.**

**When I count the bleeding rubies
Which you have inflicted upon my heart,**

**All the stars in the bowl of the sky
Fall one by one into my lap.**

**Why pray for eternal life?
Love will not last that long.**

When in Your Sea Eyes

Edge of sunlight – nascent evening
Where the two polarities of time meet.
Neither day nor night.
Neither today nor tomorrow.
At one moment, eternal.
At another, no more than mist.
The leap of lips.
The embrace of rhythmic arms.
This mingling of ours
Is neither true nor false.
Why complain?
Why listen to what the others say ?
Why delude ourselves ?
When in your sea eyes
The sun of this evening sinks
Everyone in this house
Will sleep blissfully
And the traveller will go his way.

A Prison Evening

Night - enchanting princess - descends
The sky's jewelled staircase
One step at a time.
A cool breeze whispers words of love.
Gnarled and hunchbacked
Trees in the prison compound
Are embroidering exquisite designs
On the sky's blue silk shawl.
Moonlight penetrates my soul.
Green undulating shadows -
Star-moisture - the poignancy of desire.
How precious is life!
How wonderful this passing moment!
But the tyrants
Have injected their venom
Into the veins of humanity.
They have slaughtered our joy.
Centuries of oppression, brutality, plunder.
And, yet, the moon shines
In all her splendour.
The lotus blooms.
Life is eternal. •

A Few Days More

A few days more – my love – only a few days.
We are constrained to breathe this miasmic air
In the trackless jungle of oppression.
Let us try to endure it a little longer –
This wolf-torment, this cobra-grief.
We know that suffering is our ancestral heritage
And we also know that we are helpless.
Captive bodies, chained emotions.
Shackled minds, and strangled speech.
And yet, in spite of all this,
We go on living.
Life is like the tattered coat of a beggar
To which, every day, a new rag of pain is added.
But the epoch of cruelty is coming to an end.
Be patient a little longer –
Our salvation is at hand.
The present is a burnt-out wilderness:
We have to live – but not like this.
The cold-blooded tyranny of our persecutors:
We have to bear it – but not like this.
Your beauty veiled by the dust
Of so many injustices
And the countless frustrations
Of my brief-lived youth.
Moonlit nights – sterility of desire –
The ash-covered contours of the heart.
The body on the torturer's rack.
A few days more – my love – only a few days.

The Hurricane of Remorse

Surely, this caravan of pain
Will come to a stop
Somewhere, sometime.

Surely, this restless river of life
Will cease to flow
Somewhere, sometime.

Blood-tide has not yet passed over our heads.
Only when it does
Will the executioner stay his hand.

Do not as yet unfurl the sails
Of the ship of wine -
Let the hurricane of remorse subside.

There is lethal poison in the tavern tonight.
Only those may drink
Who are fit to die.

A Letter from Prison

My beloved, I have something important to say to you:
Man himself changes when his dwelling changes.
I am bewitched by my dreams in this prison.
When sleep comes
she unclasps with her compassionate hands
my chains
and the walls come crumbling down.
It is an old story but nevertheless
I lose myself so completely in my dreams
just as a ray of sunlight
disappears in placid water.
Alluring are my dreams, my beloved,
boundless, a happy world
where I roam – ecstatic and free.
There is not a tinge of despair in my dreams
nor any fear of captivity.
“Then how painful will it be for you
to awaken from these dreams” –
you may well ask.
No, beloved, it is not like this.
I still have the courage
to give only that much of my time
to my dreams as I think fit.

Today is Monday
and for the first time
they took me out into the open air.
For the first time in my life
I saw with astonishment
how blue the sky is
and how far.
I stood still in the sunlight
and then bowed my head in reverence.
Leaning against a stone wall
I sat down
and then in a flash forgot everything -
my dreams -
freedom -
and even you, my beloved.
Nothing but the sun, earth, and I.
How peaceful it is, how very peacefull

(Adapted from Nazim Hikmat)

We, The Poets

From time immemorial
From generation to generation
We have drunk poison
We have sung our songs.
We bleed on the altar of life.
We barter away everything
For love's ecstasy.
Proud of our poverty
We walk our chosen way.
The rich stare at us - amazed.
But we are unscathed by their taunts.
Their hatred cannot harm us.
Truth is our talisman.
We endure.
We weep for those who have spent their tears -
For the destitute, the forlorn.
And for them
We endure the torturer's rack, the hangman's rope.
We are the blood-stained mirror
Of a blood-stained world -
Humanity's eternal suffering heart.
We are the warriors -
The riders of dawn.

(Adapted from Qasin Quli)

Lullaby for A Palestinian Child

Don't weep, child.
Your mother, after much weeping,
Has just fallen asleep.
Don't weep, child.
A little while ago,
Your father parted
From his grief.
Don't weep, child.
Your brother
Chasing the butterfly of his dreams
Has gone far to another country.
Don't weep, child.
The wedding carriage
Of your elder sister
Has gone to an alien land.
Don't weep, child.
In your courtyard
The dead sun was given the final bath
And the moon has just been buried.
Don't weep, child.
Mother, father, sister, brother,
Moon and sun are watching over you.
If you weep, they will make you weep more.
But if you smile, perhaps,
All of them – one day – disguised,
Will come back to play with you.

Stay With Me

My assassin, my beloved, stay with me
When the night prowls.
Having drunk the blood of many skies
The night prowls.
Musk-ointment and diamond-tipped arrows.
Wailing, laughing, singing
Her anklets making the music of pain
The night prowls.
And hearts sunk deep in breasts
Yearn for the hands
Hidden in silken sleeves.
Like children in agony
The wine writhes in my goblet
And will not be stilled
Will not be soothed
When no pretext will work
When words are useless.
The moment when night prowls.
The moment when funeral, desolate, black night
prowls.
Stay with me.
My assassin, my beloved, stay with me.

Loneliness

There is someone at the door, dear heart!
But, no, there is none . . .
It might be a wanderer
He will go hence, plodding his weary way.
Night is gone
And evaporates in thin air the starry mist
In palaces quiver the sleeping lamps
Hanging by their chains of gold.
The solitary paths are sunk in despair
And the unfriendly dust
Has obliterated the footprints
Fill the cups and drink to the lees
The bitter wine of loneliness
Lock up your slumberless doors, dear heart!
For, now no one will ever come again.

Speak....

**Speak – your lips are free.
Speak – your tongue is still yours.
This magnificent body
Is still yours.
Speak – your life is still yours.
Look inside the smithy –
Leaping flames, red-hot iron.
Padlocks open wide
Their jaws.
Chains disintegrate.
Speak – there is little time
But little though it is
It is enough.
Time enough
Before the body perishes –
Before the tongue atrophies.
Speak – truth still lives.
Say what you have
To say.**

Three Voices

Tyrant

Come, let us rejoice!
Today is the festival of the death of hope.
Humanity is buried once and for all.
Compassion has fled to the dark hills.
The graveyards are full.
I have set you free
From the bondage of night and day.
The splendour of dawn is not for you.
Sleep will bring you no comfort.
I have subjugated all freedom-loving eyes
With my sword.
I have strangled every aspiration.
No more will the boughs bend with blossoms.
Spring will writhe in the fire of Nimrod.
Never again will the pearly rain fall.
Clouds will be made of thorns and straw.
I owe allegiance to a new creed.
My laws are different.
My code is unique.
The pious bow before abominable idols.
The tall kiss the feet of clay pygmies.
On earth the doors of devotion
Have been closed
And in heaven the gates of benediction
Sealed.

Victim

Night is the harbinger of pain
And the dawning day its maturity.
At noon every vein burst with agony
And at sunset appears the demon of fear.
Was this what you destined for me?
O God! this repetitive horror of night and day.
This never ending restless journey of my life.
Not even an iota of happiness.
They say that cruelty please you
And injustice is not possible without your consent.
If this is true, should I deny your justice?
Should I listen to them
Or should I believe in you?

Voice From the Unknown

Warn all those in authority
To hold fast to their book of deeds.
When the masses surge into the streets
Crying for vengeance,
All appeals for mercy -
All blubbering excuses -
Will be spurned aside.
Patrons and influential friends will be of no use.
Reward and punishment will be dispensed here.
Here will be hell and paradise.
Here and now will be the day of judgment.

The Massacre of Beirut

Beirut – the cynosure of this world!
Beirut – paradise par excellence!
Laughing eyes of children –
Smashed mirrors, diamond-flakes, galaxies.

Now these vibrant stars
Illumine the streets of this city.
The entire land of Lebanon
Is one huge festival of lights.
Beirut – the cynosure of this world!
Beirut – paradise par excellence!

Every single destroyed house, every single ruin
Is more magnificent than the legendary palace of Dara.
Every single fighter is more valiant than Alexander.
Every single girl is more alluring than Lyla.

This city is from the beginning of time.
This city will be till the end of time.
Beirut – the heart of Lebanon!
Beirut – honeyfire of lips!
Beirut – the cynosure of this world!
Beirut – paradise par excellence!

For the Palestinian Martyrs

Wherever I go,
My beloved land,
The pain of your humiliation burns my heart.
But there are compensations:
Your dignity enhances mine,
Your love walks with me,
The fragrance of your citrus groves
Breathes through my mouth,
All those friends whom I have never seen
Keep me company,
Their hands which I have never clasped
Make mine invincible.
Far away on the indifferent highways
Of foreign lands
Or on the unfamiliar streets
Of alien cities,
Wherever I unfurl
The banner of my blood,
There flutters the flag of Palestine.
One Palestine has been destroyed
By my enemies
But my agony has given birth
To innumerable Palestines.

Do Not Ask

Do not ask me for that past love
When I thought you alone illumined this world
And because of you
The griefs of this world did not matter.
I imagined
Your beauty gave permanence to the colours of spring
And your eyes were the only stars in the universe.
I thought
If I could only make you mine
Destiny would, forever, be in my hands.
Of course, it was never like this.
This was just a hope, a dream
Now I know
There are afflictions
Which have nothing to do with desire,
Raptures
Which have nothing to do with love.
On the dark loom of centuries
Woven into silk, damask, and goldcloth
Is the oppressive enigma of our lives.
Everywhere - in the alleys and bazars -
Human flesh is being sold -
Throbbing between layers of dust - bathed in blood.
The furnace of poverty and disease disgorges body after
body -
Pus oozing out of decaying flesh.
How can I look the other way?
Your beauty is still a river of gems but now I know
There are afflictions which have nothing to do with
desire,
Raptures which have nothing to do with love.
My love, do not ask me

Scene

Path, shadows, trees, destination, door, hallowed
balcony.

And on the balcony the moon reveals her bosom . . . softly.

Like someone opening her bodice . . . softly.

Under the luminous balcony

The crouching Nile of shadows.

Lake of Nile.

And in the lake the bubble of a leaf

Floated for an instant,

Shuddered, and then burst into the air . . . softly.

Very softly, very gently, the cool colour of wine

Cascaded into my glass . . . softly.

Goblet, decanter, the rose of your hands.

And far away the image of a dream.

Emerging of itself and then suddenly dissolving . . . softly.

The heart repeated a few words of love . . . softly.

You whispered: 'Softly!'

The moon bent down low and breathed:

Softly, softer still!

Return From Dhaka

Rotten honey.
Are these decaying leaves
or torn lips?
Splotches of blood
on the grass –
buried in the foetal position –
remorse made more grotesque
than abstraction.
Twisted brass bangles
and laughter
slit from ear to ear.
On every tree
a crucified nightingale.
The river reflects the sky
and the sky is the growl
of a tiger.
Will the monsoons restore
colour to the earth?
How long will the fuel of pain
burn?

Travelogue

(1)

Peking

I am colossal -
six hundred million strong -
taller than the Pamirs -
vaster than the steppes,
valleys, plains, wildernesses.
Mine is the majesty
of ebony nights -
the sea's swell.
In my hands
are the reins
of the sleek panthers
of dawn.
All nature is cradled
in my laps.
My destiny
is the fulfilment
of dreams.

پیش خدمت ہے کتب خانہ گروپ کی طرف سے
ایک اور کتاب -
پیش نظر کتاب فیس بک گروپ کتب خانہ میں
بھی اپلوڈ کر دی گئی ہے

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1144796425720955/?ref=share>
میر ظہیر عباس دوستمانی
0307-2128068

@Stranger ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

(2)

Sinkiang

We have gathered
all our war drums
and burnt them.
Never again
shall any warrior
ride into the valley
of death.

There shall be
no more strife.

The midnight tears
of mothers, sisters, wives
have extinguished forever
the demonic conflagrations
of hate.

The beast fear is dying.

The vulture superstition is dead.

There shall be no more slaughter –
no more bloodshed, no more suffering.

Rejoice

for the world glows
with the light
of paradise.

Song

Dreams . . . destinations . . .
the refulgence of love,
maddening beauty,
mist on the embankment,
rapturous nights,
bluegrass,
restless galaxies.

Dreams . . . destinations . . .
courage,
determination,
sacrifice,
the tortuous paths of life,
the steep ascent,
memories cairned in stone.

Dreams . . . destinations . . .
togetherness,
the blossoming of flowers,
the new day's birth
in the whirlpool of time,
yearnings,
thirst.

Dreams . . . destinations . . .
the spume on the waves
of night,
ruined skyscape,
bazars bubbling over with life,
words,
deeds.

Dreams . . . destinations . . .

Visitors

My doors are open.
I am never alone.
First comes the evening –
wistful, sad.
Then the garrulous night
anxious to narrate
her wretchedness
to the stars.
The morning rubs salt
into the wounds of memory.
The noon hides
serpents of fire
in her sleeves.
All these are my visitors.
They come and go as they please.
And I am not concerned.
My thoughts are elsewhere –
over the seas –
bruised, bleeding –
my land, my home.

The Rain of Stones

The thread of vision
has snapped –
the sun and the moon
have fallen
and broken
into a thousand pieces.
Never again
will there be light –
will there be dark.
The path of desire
has been ruined
like my heart.
What will now happen
to the caravan of pain?
Who will now tend
the garden of grief?
No more dew
in my eyes.
Madness is over.
The rain of stones
has stopped.
Dust has eroded
the beloved's lips.
The banner of my blood
is torn.
Who will now drink
the murderous wine of love?

Supplication

God -
you had promised -
earth's viceregency to man -
grace abounding
and dignity.

But behold
our wretchedness -
see what this world
has done
to us.

Writhing
in our bones
like trapped animals -
hunger and humiliation
our daily lot.

Who cares for
wealth or power. All we want
is honourable bread
and something
to cover our nakedness.

If you accept our plea
we'll do
whatever you say.
If not
we'll look for another God.

Dogs

Stray street dogs -
importunate beggars by birth.
Contempt has been their lot
from the beginning of time
and wretchedness their only reward.
The nights are hell for them
and the days purgatory.
Garbage and trash
are their preserves -
they sleep
(if you call that sleeping)
in the filthiest of drains
and gutters.
The slightest sign of discontent -
show them a crumb of stale bread
and they'll make mincemeat
of one another.
Everyone kicks them around.
Most starve to death.

If only they would revolt
and teach arrogant man a lesson -
tear his fancy clothes -
bury their fangs in his bones.
If only someone
would make them see
their terrible degradation.

Love's Captives

Wearing necklaces of the hangman's noose
The singers kept on singing
Tinkling the ankle-bells of their fetters
The dancers merrily jigged their dance.
We in neither one group, nor the other
Stood by the roadside
Watching enviously
And wept silent tears.
On returning home
The erstwhile red of flowers
Had turned deathly pale
And where there was once a heart
Now there was only pain.
Round our necks hallucinations of a noose
And on our feet the dance of chains.
Then one day came love
And like the others haltered and enchained
Dragged us into the same caravan.

(Translated by Faiz)

فیض احمد فیض

کلام فیض

ایک انتخاب

ہم نے سب شعر میں سنا رکھے تھے
ہم سے جتنے سخن تمہارا رکھے تھے
فیض

پیش خدمت ہے کتب خانہ گروپ کی طرف سے
ایک اور کتاب ۔

پیش نظر کتاب فیس بک گروپ کتب خانہ میں
بھی اپلوڈ کر دی گئی ہے 📌

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1144796425720955/?ref=share>

میر ظہیر عباس روستمانی

0307-2128068 📞

@Stranger ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

حضرت میں نہ مسجد نہ خوابت میں کوئی
نہ کس کی آہنہ نہیں علم کا رہا ہے
نہ کوئی ان میں کے لئے تھا کوئی
اب جابہر شہیدوں کے حرا روں سے اذان میری
جملہ
میں

- ۷۹ ڈھاکرے واپسی پر
- ۸۰ سفرنامہ۔ (۱) پکنگ (۲) سنکیانگ،
- ۸۳ گیت
- ۸۶ میسے مٹنے والے
- ۸۸ ختم ہوئی بارشیں سنگ
- ۹۰ ربا سچا
- ۹۳ کرتے
- ۹۵ عشق اپنے مجرموں کو پابجولاں لے چلا

- ۳۰ سرویشبانہ
- ۳۲ تم اپنی کر گزرو
- ۳۵ عنزل
- ۳۷ پھول مرجھا گئے سارے
- ۳۹ کوئی عاشق کسی محبوبہ سے
- ۴۱ کہاں جاؤ گے
- ۴۳ لینن گراؤ کا گورستان
- ۴۵ عزل
- ۴۷ جب تیری سمندر آنکھوں میں
- ۴۹ زنداں کی ایک شام
- ۵۱ چند روز اور میری جان!
- ۵۳ غبارِ خاطر محفل ٹھہر جائے
- ۵۴ زنداں سے ایک خط
- ۵۶ دو نظمیں۔ (۱) شاعر لوگ (۲) فلسطینی بچے کی لوری
- ۶۲ پاس رہو
- ۶۴ تنہائی
- ۶۵ بول
- ۶۷ تین آوازیں۔ ظالم، مظلوم اور ندائے غیب
- ۷۱ ایک نمبر کربلائے بیروت کے لیے۔
- ۷۳ فلسطینی شہدار
- ۷۵ مجھے پہلی سی محبت مری محبوب نہ مانگ
- ۷۷ منظر

فہرست

۱	غم نہ کر، غم نہ کر
۲	پیرس
۴	غزل
۵	اے شام مہرباں ہو
۹	پاؤں سے لہو کو دھو ڈالو
۱۱	کجا کریں
۱۳	غزل
۱۵	اشعار
۱۶	رات دی رات
۱۷	دن اور رات
۱۸	متاع لوح و قلم
۱۹	صبح آزادی
۲۲	آخری خط
۲۳	یہ ماتم وقت کی گھڑی ہے
۲۸	یاد

غم نہ کر، غم نہ کر

درد تھم جائے گا غم نہ کر، غم نہ کر
یار لوٹ آئیں گے، دل ٹھہر جائے گا، غم نہ کر، غم نہ کر
زخم بھر جائے گا،

غم نہ کر، غم نہ کر
دن نکل آئے گا

غم نہ کر، غم نہ کر
ابر کھل جائے گا، رات ڈھل جائے گی

غم نہ کر، غم نہ کر
رت بدل جائے گی

غم نہ کر، غم نہ کر

دوسرے سائے کی موہوم سی امید لیے
روزِ مرتہ کی طرح

زیرِ لب

شرحِ بے دردیِ ایام کی تمہید لیے
اور کوئی اجنبی

ان روشنیوں سالیوں سے کترانا ہوا
اپنے بے خوابِ شبستاں کی طرف جاتا ہوا

پیرس

دِن ڈھلا، کوچہ و بازار میں صف بستہ ہوئیں
زرد رُوروشنیاں
ان میں ہر ایک کے کشکول سے برسیں دم جھم
اس بھرے شہر کی نابودگیاں
دورِ پس منظرِ افلاک میں دھندلانے لگے
عظمتِ رفتہ کے نشان
پیش منظر ہیں
کسی سایہ دیوار سے لپٹا ہوا سایہ کوئی

غزل

دونوں جہان نیری محبت میں ہمارے کے
وہ جا رہا ہے کوئی شبِ غم گزار کے

دیراں ہے میکدہ، خم و ساغر اُداس ہیں
تم کیا گئے کہ رُوٹھ گئے دن بہار کے

اک فرصتِ گناہ ملی، وہ بھی چار دن
دیکھے ہیں ہسم نے حوصلے پروردگار کے

دنیا نے تیری یاد سے بیگانہ کر دیا
تجھ سے بھی دلفریب ہیں غم روزگار کے

بھولے سے مسکراؤ تو دئے تھے وہ آج فیض
مت پوچھ دلو لے دلِ ناکردہ کار کے

کرچیاں دیدہٴ حسد کی
نخس و خاشاک رنجشوں کے
اتنی سنان شاہراہیں ،
اتنی گنجان قتل گاہیں
جن سے آئے ہیں ہم گزر کر
آبلہ بن کے ہر قدم پر
یوں پاؤں کٹ گئے ہیں
رستے سمٹ گئے ہیں
مخملیں اپنے بادلوں کی
آج پاؤں تلے بچھا دے
شانی کرب رہرواں ہو
اے شام مہرباں ہو

آج تن پر دھنک کی صورت
قوس در قوس بٹ گئے ہیں
زخم سب کھل گئے ہیں
داغ جانا تھا چھٹ گئے ہیں
ترے توشے میں کچھ تو ہوگا
مرہم درد کا دو شاہ
تن کے اُس انگ پر اڑھا دے
درد سب سے سوا جہاں ہو
اے شام مہرباں ہو
اے شام شہر یاراں
ہم پہ مہرباں ہو

دوزخی دشت نفرتوں کے
بے درد نفرتوں کے

اے شام مہرباں ہو!

اے شام مہرباں ہو
اے شام شہرِ یاداں
ہم پر مہرباں ہو
دو زخمی دوپہرِ ستم کی
بے سبب ستم کی
دوپہرِ درد و غیظ و غم کی
بے زباں درد و غیظ و غم کی
اس دو زخمی دوپہر کے تازیانے

سب دیکھنے والے کہتے تھے
یہ کیسی ریتِ رچائی ہے
یہ مہندی کیوں لگائی ہے
وہ کہتے تھے، کیوں قحطِ دہنا
کا ناحق چہرہ چاکرتے ہو
پاؤں سے لہو کو دھو ڈالو!
یہ راہیں جب اٹ جائیں گی
سو رستے ان سے پھوٹیں گے
تم دل کو سنبھالو جس میں ابھی
سو طرح کے نشتر ٹوٹیں گے

پاؤں سے لہو کو دھو ڈالو

ہم کیا کرتے کس رہ چلتے
ہر راہ میں کانٹے بکھرے تھے
اُن رشتوں کے جو چھوٹ گئے
اُن صدیوں کے یارانوں کے
جو اک اک کر کے ٹوٹ گئے
جس راہ چلے، جس سمت گئے
یوں پاؤں لہو لہان ہوئے

جو ہے تو اس کا کیا کریں

نہیں ہے تو بھی کیا کریں

بتا، بتا،

بتا، بتا،

جو میرے تیرے شہر کی
ہراک گلی میں
میرے تیرے نقشِ پا کے بے نشاں مزار ہیں
جو میری تیری رات کے
ستارے زخم زخم ہیں
جو میری تیری صبح کے
گلاب چاک چاک ہیں
یہ زخم سارے بے دوا
یہ چاک سارے بے رفو
کسی پہ راکھ چاند کی
کسی پہ اوس کا لہو
یہ ہے بھی یا نہیں، بنا
یہ ہے کہ محض جال ہے
مرے تمہارے عنکبوتِ وہم کا بُنا ہوا

کیا کریں

مری تری نگاہ میں
جو لاکھ انتظاریں ہیں
جو میرے تیرے تن بدن میں
لاکھ دل فگار ہیں
جو میری تیری آنکھوں کی بے بسی سے
سب قلم نزار ہیں

غزل

دربار میں اب سطوتِ شاہی کی علامت
درباں کا عصا ہے کہ مُصنّف کا قلم ہے

آوارہ ہے پھر کوہِ ندا پر جو بشارت
تمہیدِ مَسترت ہے کہ طولِ شبِ غم ہے

جس دجّی کو گلیوں میں لیے پھرتے ہیں طفلان
یہ میرا گریباں ہے کہ شکر کا علم ہے

جس نور سے ہے شہر کی دیوارِ دُرُخشاں
یہ خونِ شہیداں ہے کہ زرِ خانہِ بَجم ہے

حلقہ کیے بیٹھے رہو اک شمع کو یارو
کچھ روشنی باقی تو ہے ہر چند کہ کم ہے

اشعار

رات یوں دل میں تری کھوئی ہوئی یاد آئی
جیسے ویرانے میں چکے سے بہار آجائے
جیسے صحراؤں میں ہولے سے چلے بادِ نسیم
جیسے بیمار کو بے وجہ استمرار آجائے

قطرہ۔ رات دی رات

آج رات اک رات دی رات جی کے
اساں جگہ سزاراں جی ریتا اے
آج رات امت دے جام وانگوں
اینہاں ہتھیاں نے یار نوں پی لتا اے

دن اور رات

تیرگی جال ہے اور بھالا ہے نور
اک شکاری ہے دن، اک شکاری ہے رات
جگ سمندر ہے جس میں کنارے سے دور
پمچلیوں کی طرح ابن آدم کی ذات
جگ سمندر ہے ساحل پہ ہیں ماہی گیر
جال تھا مے کوئی، کوئی بھالا لیے
میری باری کب آئے گی کیا جانے
دن کے بھالے سے مجھ کو کریں گے شکار
رات کے جال میں یا کریں گے اسیر؟

متاع لوح و تسلّم

متاع لوح و تسلّم چھن گئی تو کیا غم ہے
کہ خونِ دل میں ڈبولی ہیں انگلیاں میں نے
زباں پہ مھر لگی ہے تو کیا کہ رکھ دی ہے
ہر ایک حلقہ زنجیر میں زباں میں نے

جگر کی آگ، نظر کی اُمنگ، دل کی جلن
کسی پہ چارۂ حسرتوں کا کچھ اثر ہی نہیں
کہاں سے آئی نگارِ صبا، کدھر کو گئی
ابھی چراغِ سرورہ کو کچھ خبر ہی نہیں
ابھی گرانیِ شب میں کمی نہیں آئی
نجاتِ دیدہ و دل کی گھڑی نہیں آئی
چلے چلو کہ وہ منزل ابھی نہیں آئی

جواں لہو کی پُر اسرار شاہراہوں سے
چلے جو یار تو دامن پہ کتنے ہاتھ پڑے
دیارِ حسن کی بے صبر خواب گاہوں سے
پکارتی رہیں باہیں، بدن بُلالتے رہے
بہت عزیز تھی لیکن رُخِ سحر کی لگن
بہت قریں تھا حسینانِ نور کا دامن
بک بک تھی تمنا، دلی دلی تھی ہمت کن

سنا ہے ہو بھی چکا ہے فراقِ ظلمت و نور
سنا ہے ہو بھی چکا ہے وصالِ منزل و گام
بدل چکا ہے بہت اہل درد کا دستور
نشاطِ وصلِ حلال و عذابِ ہجرِ حرام

صبحِ آزادی اگست ۱۹۴۷ء

یہ داغ داغ اُجالا، یہ شب گزیدہ سحر
وہ انتظار تھا جس کا، یہ وہ سحر تو نہیں
یہ وہ سحر تو نہیں جس کی آرزو لے کر
چلے تھے یار کہ مل جائے گی کہیں نہ کہیں
فلک کے دشت میں تاروں کی آخری منزل
کہیں تو ہوگا شبِ سُست موج کا ساحل
کہیں تو جا کے رُکے گا سفینہٴ عسیمِ دل

شاید مری الفت کو بہت یاد کروگی
اپنے دلِ معصوم کو ناشاد کروگی
آؤ گی مری گور پہ تم اشک بہانے
نوخیز بہاروں کے حبس پھول چڑھانے

شاید مری تربت کو بھی ٹھکرا کے چلو گی
شاید مری بے سود و فداؤں پہ ہنسو گی
اس وضعِ کرم کا بھی تمہیں پاس نہ ہوگا
لیکن دلِ ناکام کو احساس نہ ہوگا

القصد مالِ عنیم الفت پہ ہنسو تم
یا اشک بہاتی رہو، نہ یاد کرو تم
ماضی پہ ندامت ہو تمہیں یا کہ مُسترت
نہاموش پڑا سوتے گا داماندہ الفت

آخری خط

وہ وقت مری جان بہت دور نہیں ہے
جب دُروے ک جائیں گی سب نیست کی آہیں
اور حد سے گزر جائے گا اندوہ نہ سانی
تھک جائیں گی ترسی ہوئی ناکام نگاہیں
چھن جائیں گے مجھ سے مے آنسو مری آہیں
چھن جائے گی مجھ سے مری بے کار جوانی

اکھڑ گئی سانس تپوں کی
چلی گئیں اُونگھ میں ہوائیں
گجر بجا حکیم خامشی کا
تو چپ میں گم ہو گئیں صدائیں
سحر کی گوری کی چھاتیوں سے
ڈھلک گئی تیرگی کی چادر

اور اس بجائے
بکھر گئے اس کے تن بدن پر
زراں تنہائیوں کے سائے
اور اس کو کچھ بھی خبر نہیں ہے
کسی کو کچھ بھی خبر نہیں ہے
کہ دن ڈھلے شہر سے نکل کر
کہ صحر کو جانے کا رخ کیا تھا
نہ کوئی جادہ، نہ کوئی منزل

یہ ماتمِ وقت کی گھڑی ہے

ٹھہر گئی آسماں کی ندیا
وہ جاگلی ہے افق کنارے
اُداس رنگوں کی چاندنیا
اُتر گئے ساحلِ زمیں پر
سبھی کھویا
تمام تارے

یہ مٹر ہے یارِ مہرباں کی
یہ لعل لب ہائے مہوشاں کے
یہ مرحمتِ شیخِ بد زباں کی

یہ جامہٴ روز و شب گزیدہ
مجھے یہ پیراہنِ دریدہ
عزیز بھی، ناپسند بھی ہے
کبھی یہ فرمانِ جوشِ وحشت
کہ نوچ کر اس کو پھینک ڈالو
کبھی یہ اصرارِ حرفِ اُلفت
کہ چوم کر پھر گلے لگا لو

کسی مسافر کو

اب دماغ سفر نہیں ہے
یہ وقت زنجیرِ روز و شب کی
کہیں سے ٹوٹی ہوئی کڑی ہے
یہ ماتمِ وقت کی گھڑی ہے

یہ وقت آئے تو بے ارادہ
کبھی کبھی میں بھی دیکھتا ہوں
اُتار کر ذات کا لبادہ
کہیں سیاہی ملامتوں کی
کہیں پہ گلُ بوٹے اُفتوں کے
کہیں لکیریں ہیں آنسوؤں کی
کہیں پہ خونِ جگر کے دھبے
یہ چاک ہے پنجرہِ عدو کا

پیش خدمت ہے کتب خانہ گروپ کی طرف سے
ایک اور کتاب -
پیش نظر کتاب فیس بک گروپ کتب خانہ میں
بھی اپلوڈ کر دی گئی ہے 📖
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1144796425720955/?ref=share>
میر ظہیر عباس روستمانی
0307-2128068 📞
@Stranger ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

یاد

دشتِ تنہائی میں، اے جانِ جہاں، لڑناں ہیں
تیری آواز کے سائے، ترے ہونٹوں کے سراب
دشتِ تنہائی میں، دوری کے خس و خاشاک تلے
کھل رہے ہیں، ترے پہلو کے کمن اور گلاب

اُٹھ رہی ہے کہیں قربت سے تری سانس کی آنچ
اپنی خوشبو میں سلگتی ہوئی مدھم مدھم
دور - افق پار، چمکتی ہوئی قطرہ قطرہ
گر رہی ہے تری دلدارِ نغمہ کی شبِ نغم

اس قدر پیار سے، اے جانِ جہاں، رکھا ہے
دل کے رخسار پر اس وقت تری یاد نے ہات
یوں گماں ہوتا ہے، گرچہ ہے ابھی صبحِ فراق
ڈھل گیا ہجر کا دن، ابھی گئی وصل کی رات

سرودِ شبانہ

نیم شب چاند، خودِ خدا مویشی
مخملِ بہت و بود ویراں ہے
پیکرِ التجا ہے حرفِ ملامتی
بزمِ انجسَمِ فسرہ ساماں ہے
آبشارِ سکوت جاری ہے
چار سُو بے خودی سی طاری ہے
زندگی جزوِ خواب ہے گویا
ساری دنیا سراب ہے گویا

سو رہی ہے گھنے درختوں پر!
چاندنی کی بھٹکی ہوئی آواز
ککشاں نیم دانگا ہوں سے
کہہ رہی ہے حدیثِ شوقِ نیاز
سازِ دل کے خموش تاروں سے
چھن رہا ہے خمارِ کیف آگیاں
آرزو، خواب، تیرا رُونِ حسیں

تم اپنی کرنی کر گزرو

اب کیوں اُس دن کا ذکر کرو
جب دل ٹکڑے ہو جائے گا
اور سارے غم مٹ جائیں گے
جو کچھ پایا کھو جائے گا
جو مل نہ سکا وہ پائیں گے

یہ دن تو وہی پہلا دن ہے
جو پہلا دن تھا چاہت کا
ہم جس کی تمنا کرتے رہے
اور جس سے ہر دم ڈرتے رہے
یہ دن تو کتنی بار آیا
سو بار بے اور اُجھڑ گئے
سو بار ٹٹے اور بھر پایا

اب کیوں اُس دن کی منکر کر چ
جب دل ٹکڑے ہو جائے گا
اور سارے غم مٹ جائیں گے
تم خوف و خطر سے درگزر و
جو ہونا ہے سو ہونا ہے

گر منہنا ہے تو ہنسنا ہے
گر رونا ہے تو رونا ہے
تم اپنی کرنی کر گزرو
جو ہوگا دیکھا جائے گا

غزل

ستم بکھلائے گارِ سم و فاء ایسے نہیں ہوتا
صنم دکھلائیں گے راہِ خدا ایسے نہیں ہوتا

گنوسبِ حسرتیں جو خوں ہوئی ہیں تن کے مقتل میں
مرے قاتلِ حسابِ خوں بہا ایسے نہیں ہوتا

جہاں دل میں کام آتی ہیں تدبیریں نہ تعزیریں
یہاں پیمانِ تسلیم و رضا ایسے نہیں ہوتا

ہر اک شب ہر گھڑی گزرنے قیامت یوں تو ہوتا ہے
مگر ہر صبح ہو روز جزا ایسے نہیں ہوتا
رواں ہے نبض دوران گردشوں میں آساں سکر
جو تم کہتے ہو سب کچھ ہو چکا ایسے نہیں ہوتا

پھول مُرجھا گئے سارے

پھول مرجھا گئے ہیں سارے
تھمتے نہیں ہیں آسماں کے آنسو
شمعیں بے نور ہو گئی ہیں
آئینے چور ہو گئے ہیں
ساز سب بج کے کھو گئے ہیں
پایلیں بجھ گئے سو گئی ہیں
اور ان بادلوں کے پیچھے
دُور اِس رات کا دُلا رَا

درد کا ستارا
ٹٹھار رہا ہے
جھنجھنار رہا ہے
مُکرا رہا ہے

کوئی عاشق کسی محبوبہ سے!

یاد کی راگزر جس پہ اسی صورت سے
تدبیریں بیت گئی ہیں تمہیں چلتے چلتے
ختم ہو جائے جو دو چار قدم اور چلو
موڑ پڑتا ہے جہاں دشتِ فراموشی کا
جس سے آگے نہ کوئی میں ہوں نہ کوئی تم ہو
سانس تنہا ہے ہیں نگاہیں کہ نہ جانے کس دم
تم پلٹ آؤ، گزر جاؤ، یا مڑ کر دیکھو

گرچہ واقف ہیں نگاہیں کہ یہ سب دھوکا ہے
گر کہیں تم سے ہم آغوش ہوئی پھر سے نظر
پھوٹ نکلے گی وہاں اور کوئی راہ گز
پھر اسی طرح جہاں ہوگا مقابل پیہم
سایہ زلف کا اور جنبش بازو کا سفر

دوسری بات بھی جھوٹی ہے کہ دل جانتا ہے
یاں کوئی موڑ کوئی دشت کوئی گھات نہیں
جس کے پرے میں مرا ماہ رواں ڈوب سکے
تم سے چلتی رہے یہ راہ، یونہی اچھا ہے
تم نے مڑ کر بھی نہ دیکھا تو کوئی بات نہیں

کہاں جاؤ گے

اور کچھ دیر میں نٹ جائے گا ہر بام پہ چاند
عکس کھو جائیں گے آئینے ترس جائیں گے
عرش کے دیدہ نمناک سے باری باری
سب تارے سرخاشاک برس جائیں گے
آس کے مارے تھکے ہارے شبتانوں میں
اپنی تنہائی سمیٹے گا، بچھائے گا کوئی
بے وفائی کی گھڑی، ترک مدارات کا وقت
اس گھڑی اپنے سوا یاد نہ آئے گا کوئی!

ترکِ دنیا کا سماں، ختمِ ملاقات کا وقت
اس گھڑی اے دلِ آوارہ کہاں جاؤ گے
اس گھڑی کوئی کسی کا بھی نہیں رہنے دو
کوئی اس وقت ملے گا ہی نہیں رہنے دو
اور ملے گا بھی تو اس طور کہ پچھاؤ گے
اس گھڑی اے دلِ آوارہ کہاں جاؤ گے

اور کچھ دیر بٹھس جاؤ کہ پھر شترِ صبح
زخم کی طرح ہر اک آنکھ کو بیدار کرے
اور ہر شے داماںدگیِ آخرِ شب
بھول کر ساعتِ در ماندگیِ آخرِ شب
جان پہچانِ ملاقات پہ اصرار کرے

لینن گراڈ کا گورستان

سردیوں پر
زردیوں پر
تازہ گرم لہو کی صورت
گلہ ستنوں کے چھینٹے ہیں
کتبے سب بے نام ہیں لیکن
ہر اک پھول پہ نام لکھا ہے
غافل سونے والے کا

یاد میں رونے والے کا
اپنے فرض سے فارغ ہو کر
اپنے لہو کی تان کے چادر
سارے بیٹے خواب میں ہیں
اپنے غموں کا ہار پرو کر
اماں اکیلی جاگ رہی ہے

غزل

ہم نے سب شعر میں سوائے تھے
ہم سے جتنے سخن تمھارے تھے

رنگ و خوشبو کے حسن و خوبی کے
تم سے تھے جتنے استعارے تھے

تیرے قول و قرار سے پہلے
اپنے کچھ اور بھی سہارے تھے

جب وہ لعل و گہرِ حساب کیے
جو ترے غم نے دل پہ وارے تھے

میرے دامن میں آگرے سائے
جتنے طشتِ فلک میں تائے تھے

عمر جاوید کی دُعا کرتے
فیض اتنے وہ کب ہمارے تھے

جب تیری سمند رانکھوں میں

(گیت)

یہ دھوپ کنار، شام ڈھلے

ملے ہیں دونوں وقت جہاں

جو رات نہ دن، جو آج نہ کل

پل بھر کو امر، پل بھر میں دھواں

اس دھوپ کنارے، پل دوپل

ہونٹوں کی پیک

باہوں کی چھنک

یہ میل ہمارا، جھوٹ نہ بچ
کیوں زار کرو، کیوں دوش دھرو
کس کارن جھوٹی بات کرو
جب تیری سمندر آنکھوں میں
اس شام کا سورج ڈوبے گا
سکھ سوئیں گے گھر در والے
اور راہی اپنی رہ لے گا

زنداں کی ایک شام

شام کے پیچ و خم ستاروں سے
زینہ زینہ اتر رہی ہے رات
یوں صبا پاس سے گزرتی ہے
جیسے کہہ دی کسی نے پیار کی بات
صحن زنداں کے بے وطن اشجار
مسنگوں، محبوبیں بنانے میں
دامن آسماں پہ نقش و نگار

شانہ بام پر دمکتا ہے!
مہرباں چاندنی کا دستِ جمیل
خاک میں گھل گئی ہے آبِ نجوم
نور میں گھل گیا ہے عرش کا سیل
سبز گوشوں میں نیلگوں سائے
لہلاتے ہیں جس طرح دل میں
موجِ دردِ فراقِ یار آئے

دل سے پیہم خیال کہتا ہے
اتنی شیریں ہے زندگی اس پل
ظلم کا زہر گھولنے والے
کامراں ہو سکیں گے آج نہ کل
جلوہ گاہِ وصال کی شمعیں
وہ بجھا بھی چکے اگر تو کیا
چاند کو گل کریں تو ہم جانیں

چند روز اور مری جان !

چند روز اور مری جان ! فقط چند ہی روز
ظلم کی چھاؤں میں دم لینے پر مجبور ہیں ہم
اور کچھ دیر ستم سہہ لیں، تڑپ لیں، رو لیں
اپنے اجداد کی میراث ہے معذور ہیں ہم
جسم پر قید ہے، جذبات پر زنجیریں ہیں
فکر محبوس ہے، گفتار پر تعزیریں ہیں
اپنی ہمت ہے کہ ہم پھر بھی جیے جاتے ہیں
زندگی کیا کسی مفلس کی قبا ہے جس میں
ہر گھڑی درد کے پیوند لگے جاتے ہیں
لیکن اب ظلم کی میعاد کے دن تھوڑے ہیں
اک ذرا صبر، کہ سنہ یاد کے دن تھوڑے ہیں

عرصہ دھڑ کی مجلسی ہوئی ویرانی میں
ہم کو رہنا ہے یہ یونہی تو نہیں رہنا ہے
اجنبی ہاتھوں کا بے نام گرا بنا رستم
آج سہنا ہے، ہمیشہ تو نہیں سہنا ہے

یہ ترے حسن سے لپٹی ہوئی آلام کی گرد
اپنی دو روزہ جوانی کی شکستوں کا شمار
چاندنی راتوں کا بے کار دکھتا ہوا درد
دل کی بے سود ٹرپ، جسم کی مایوس پکار
چند روز اور مری جان! فقط چند ہی روز

غبارِ خاطرِ محفل ٹھہر جائے

کہیں تو کارواںِ درد کی منزل ٹھہر جائے
کنارے آگے عمرِ رواں یا دل ٹھہر جائے

اماں کیسی کہ موجِ خوں ابھی سر سے نہیں گزری
گزر جائے تو شاید بازوئے قاتل ٹھہر جائے

کوئی دمِ بادِ بانِ کشتیِ صہبِ اکوتہ رکھو
ذرا ٹھہرو، غبارِ خاطرِ محفل ٹھہر جائے

خُمِ ساقی میں جز زہرِ ہلاہل کچھ نہیں باقی
جو ہو محفل میں اس اکرام کے قابل ٹھہر جائے

نہم حکمت

زندادں سے ایک خط

مری جان تجھ کو بتلاؤں، بہت نازک یہ نکتہ ہے
بدل جاتا ہے انساں جب مکاں اس کا بدلتا ہے !
مجھے زنداں میں پیار آنے لگا ہے اپنے خوابوں پر
جو شب کو نیند اپنے مہرباں ہاتھوں سے
دا کرتی ہے در اس کا
تو آگرتی ہے ہر دیوار اس کی میرے قدموں پر
میں ایسے غرق ہو جاتا ہوں اس دم اپنے خوابوں میں
کہ جیسے اک کرن ٹھہرے ہوئے پانی پہ گرتی ہے

❖ ترک کا شہرہ آفاق شاعر جس نے پہلی جنگ عظیم کے دوران ترکی کی جنگ حریت میں حصہ لیا اور بعد
میں بیشتر عرصہ قید و بند اور جلاوطنی میں گزارا۔ ۱۹۳۷ء میں وفات پائی۔

میں ان لمحوں میں کتنا سرخوش و دلشاد پھرتا ہوں
جہاں کی جگمگاتی وسعتوں میں کس قدر آزاد پھرتا ہوں
جہاں درد و الم کا نام ہے کوئی نہ زنداں ہے
”تو پھر بیدار ہونا کس قدر تم پر گراں ہوگا؟“
نہیں ایسا نہیں ہے۔ میری جاں! میرا یہ قصہ ہے
میں اپنے عزم و ہمت سے
وہی کچھ بخشا ہوں نیند کو جو اس کا حصہ ہے

دو نظمیں

قفقاز کے شاعر قاسم قلی سے ملخوذ

(۱)

شاعر لوگ

ہر اک دور میں ہم، ہر زمانے میں ہم
زہر پیتے رہے، گیت گاتے رہے
جان دیتے رہے زندگی کے لیے
ساعتِ وصل کی سرخوشی کے لیے

دین و دنیا کی دولت لٹاتے رہے
فقر و فاقہ کا توشہ بٹھالے ہوئے
جو بھی رستہ چننا اس پہ چلتے رہے
مال و آلے حقارت سے تکتے رہے
طعن کرتے رہے، ہاتھ ملتے رہے
ہم نے ان پر کیا حرفِ حق سنگِ زن
جن کی ہیبت سے دنیا لرزتی رہی
جن پہ آنسو بہانے کو کوئی نہ تھا
اپنی آنکھ اُن کے غم میں برستی رہی
سب سے اوجھل ہوئے حکمِ حاکم پہ ہم
قید خانے سے، نازیانے سے
لوگ سنتے رہے سازِ دل کی صدا
اپنے نغمے سلاخوں سے چھنتے رہے

خونچکاں دہر کا خونچکاں آئینہ
دکھ بھری خلق کا دکھ بھرا دل ہیں ہم
طبع شاعر ہے جنگاہِ عدل و رستم
منصفِ خیر و شر، حق و باطل ہیں ہم

(۲)

فلسطینی بچے کیلئے لوری

مت رو نہتے
رو رو کے ابھی
تیری اُمی کی آنکھ لگی ہے
مت رو نہتے
کچھ ہی پہلے
تیرے ابا نے
اپنے غم سے رخصت لی ہے

مت رو نیچے

تیرا بھائی

اپنے خواب کی تتلی پیچھے

دور کہیں پر دیس گیا ہے

مت رو نیچے

تیری باجی کا

ڈولا پر اٹے دیس گیا ہے

مت رو نیچے

تیرے آنگن میں

مردہ سورج نہلا کے گئے ہیں

چندر ماہ دفنا کے گئے ہیں

مت رو نیچے

اتمی، آبا، باجی، بھائی

چاند اور سورج

تو گر روئے گا تو یہ سب
اور بھی تجھ کو رُ لوائیں گے
تو مسکائے گا تو شاید
سارے اک دن بھیس بدل کر
اور بھی تجھ کو رُ لوائیں گے

پاس رہو

تم مرے پاس رہو
میرے قاتل، مرے دلدار، مرے پاس رہو
جس گھڑی رات چلے،
آسمانوں کا لہو پی کے یہ رات چلے
مریم مشک لیے، نشتر الماس لیے
بہن کرتی ہوئی ہنستی ہوئی، گاتی نکلے
درد کے کاسنی پازیب بجاتی نکلے
جس گھڑی سینوں میں ڈوبے ہوئے دل

آستینوں میں نہاں ہاتھوں کی رہ تیکنے لگیں

آس لیے

اور بچوں کے بکنے کی طرح قُلُقُل ے

بہرِ ناسودگی چلے تو منائے نہ منے

جب کوئی بات بنائے نہ بنے

جب نہ کوئی بات چلے

جس گھڑی رات چلے

جس گھڑی ماتمی، سنسان، سیہ رات چلے

پاس رہو

میرے قاتل، مرے دلدار مرے پاس رہو !

پیش خدمت ہے کتب خانہ گروپ کی طرف سے
ایک اور کتاب ۔
پیش نظر کتاب فیس بک گروپ کتب خانہ میں
بھی اپلوڈ کر دی گئی ہے 📖

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1144796425720955/?ref=share>

میر ظہیر عباس روستمانی

0307-2128068 📞

@Stranger ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

تنہائی

پھر کوئی آیا دل زار! نہیں کوئی نہیں
راہرو ہوگا، کہیں اور چلا جائے گا
دھسل چکی رات بکھرنے لگا تاروں کا غبار
لٹکھڑانے لگے ایوانوں میں خوابیدہ چراغ
سو گئی راستہ تک تک کے ہر اک راہ گزار
اجنبی خاک نے دھندلائے قدموں کے سراغ
گل کر و شمعیں بڑھا دو مے و مینا و ایاغ
اپنے بے خواب کواڑوں کو مقفل کر لو
اب یہاں کوئی نہیں، کوئی نہیں آئے گا

بول...

بول، کہ لب آزاد ہیں تیرے
بول، زباں اب تک تیری ہے
تیرا ستواں جسم ہے تیرا
بول کہ جاں اب تک تیری ہے
دیکھ کہ آہن گر کی دکان میں
شند ہیں شعلے مسرخ ہے آہن

کھلنے لگے قفلوں کے دہانے
پھیلا ہر اک زنجیر کا دامن
بول، یہ تھوڑا وقت بہت ہے
جسم و زباں کی موت سے پہلے
بول، کہ سچ زندہ ہے اب تک
بول، جو کچھ کہنا ہے کہہ لے!

تین آوازیں

(۱) ظالم

جشن ہے ماتم اُمید کا آؤ لوگو
مرگِ انبوہ کا ہتھوار مناؤ لوگو
عدم آباد کو آباد کیا ہے میں نے
تم کو دن رات سے آزاد کیا ہے میں نے
جلوہ صبح سے کیا مانگتے ہو
بسترِ خواب سے کیا چاہتے ہو

ساری آنکھوں کو تہ تیغ کیا ہے میں نے
سارے خوابوں کا گلا گھونٹ دیا ہے میں نے
اب نہ لکے گی کسی شاخ پہ پھولوں کی جنا
فصلِ گل آئے گی نمود کے انگارے
اب نہ برسات میں برسے گی گہر کی برکھا
ابر آئے گا خس و خوار کے انبار لیے
میرا مسلک بھی نیا راہِ طریقت بھی نئی
میرے قانون بھی نئے میری شریعت بھی نئی
اب فقہانِ حرم دستِ صنم چومیں گے
سرو قد میٹے کے بونوں کے قدم چومیں گے
فرش پر آج درِ صدق و صفا بند ہوا
عرش پر آج ہر اک بابِ دعا بند ہوا

(۲) مظلوم

رات چھائی تو ہر اک درد کے دھارے چھوٹے
صبح پھوٹی تو ہر اک زخم کے ٹانکے ٹوٹے
دوپہر آئی تو ہر اک رگ نے لہو برسا یا
دن ڈھلا، خوف کا عفریت متا بل آیا
یا خدا یہ مری گردانِ شب و روز و سحر
یہ مری عمر کا بے منزل و آرام سفر
کیا یہی کچھ مری قسمت میں لکھا ہے تو نے
ہر مسرت سے مجھے عیاں کیا ہے تو نے
وہ یہ کہتے ہیں تو خوشنود ہر اک ظلم ہے ہے
وہ یہ کہتے ہیں ہر اک ظلم ترے حکم سے ہے
گریہ سچ ہے تو ترے عدل سے انکار کروں؟
ان کی مانوں کہ تری ذات کا اقرار کروں؟

(۳) ندائے غیب

ہر اک اُولی الامر کو صدا دو
کہ اپنی فسادِ عمل سنبھالے
اکٹھے گاجب جمع سرفروشاں
پڑیں گے دار و رسن کے لالے
کوئی نہ ہوگا کہ جو بچا لے
جز اسز اسب یہیں پہ ہوگی
یہیں عذاب و ثواب ہوگا
یہیں سے اکٹھے گا شورِ محشر
یہیں پہ روزِ حساب ہوگا

ایک نغمہ کر بلائے بیروت کے لیے

بیروت نگارِ بزمِ جہاں
بیروت بدیلِ بلغِ جہاں
بچوں کی ہستی آنکھوں کے
جو آئے چکنا چور ہوئے
اب اُن کے ستاروں کی لڑ سے
اس شہر کی راتیں روشن ہیں
اور رختاں ہے ارضِ لبناں
بیروت نگارِ بزمِ جہاں
جو چہرے ہو کے غارے کی
زینت سے سوا پُر نور ہوئے

اب ان کے زنگیں پرتو سے
اس شہر کی گلیاں روشن ہیں
اور تاباں ہے ارضِ لبناں

بیروت نگارِ بزمِ جہاں
ہر دیراں گھر، ہر ایک کھنڈر

ہم پایۂ قصرِ دارا ہے
ہر غازی رشکِ اسکندر

ہر دختر، ہمسریلی ہے
یہ شہر ازل سے قائم ہے
یہ شہر ابد تک دائم ہے

بیروت نگارِ بزمِ جہاں
بیروت بدیلِ باغِ جہاں

فلسطینی شہدار جو پردیس میں کام آئے

میں جہاں پر بھی گیا ارضِ وطن
تیری تذلیل کے داغوں کی جلن دل میں لیے
تیری حرمت کے چہراغوں کی لگن دل میں لیے
تیری اُلفت تری یادوں کی کسک ساتھ گئی
تیرے نایب شگوفوں کی مہک ساتھ گئی

سارے اُن دیکھے رفیقوں کا جلو سا تھ رہا
کتنے ہاتھوں سے ہم آغوش مرا ہا تھ رہا
دور پردیس کی بے مہر گزرگاہوں میں
اجنبی شہر کی بے نام و نشان اہوں میں
جس زمیں پر بھی کھلا میرے لہو کا پرچم
لہلہاتا ہے وہاں ارضِ فلسطیں کا علم
تیرے اعدائے کیا ایک فلسطیں برباد
میرے زخموں نے کیے کتنے فلسطیں آباد

پیش خدمت ہے کتب خانہ گروپ کی طرف سے
ایک اور کتاب .

پیش نظر کتاب فیس بک گروپ کتب خانہ میں
بھی اپلوڈ کر دی گئی ہے

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1144796425720955/?ref=share>

میر ظہیر عباس روستمانی

0307-2128068

@Stranger

مجھ سے پہلی سی محبت مری محبوب نہ مانگ

مجھ سے پہلی سی محبت مری محبوب نہ مانگ
میں نے سمجھا کہ تو ہے تو درخشاں ہے حیات
تیرا غم ہے تو غم دہر کا جھگڑا کیا ہے
تیری صورت سے ہے عالم میں بہاروں کو ثبات
تیری آنکھوں کے سوا دنیا میں رکھا کیا ہے؟
تو جو مل جائے تو تقدیر نگوں ہو جائے
یوں نہ تھا، میں نے فقط چاہا تھا یوں ہو جائے
اور بھی دکھ ہیں زمانے میں محبت کے سوا
راحتیں اور بھی ہیں وصل کی راحت کے سوا

اَن گنت صدیوں کے تاریک ہیما نہ طلسم
ریشم و اطلس و کنخاب میں بُنوائے ہوئے
جا بجا پکتے ہوئے کوچہ و بازار میں جسم
خاک میں لتھڑے ہوئے خون میں نہلائے ہوئے

نوٹ جاتی ہے ادھر کو بھی نظر کیا کیجے
اب بھی دلکش ہے ترا حسن، مگر کیا کیجے
اور بھی دکھ ہیں زمانے میں محبت کے سوا
راحتیں اور بھی ہیں وصل کی راحت کے سوا
مجھ سے پہلی سی محبت مری محبوب نہ مانگ

منظر

رگزر، سائے، شجر، منزل و در، حلقہ بام

بام پر سینہ بہتاب کھلا، آہستہ

جس طرح کھولے کوئی بندِ قبا، آہستہ

حلقہ بام تلے، سایوں کا ٹھہرا ہوا نیل

نیل کی جھیل

جھیل میں چپکے سے تیرا، کسی پتے کا حباب

ایک پل تیرا، چلا، پھوٹ گیا، آہستہ

بہت آہستہ، بہت ہلکا، خنک رنگِ شراب

میرے شیشے میں ڈھلا، آہستہ

شیشہ و جام، صراحی، ترے ہاتھوں کے گلاب

جس طرح دور کسی خواب کا نقش

آپ ہی آپ بنا اور مٹا آہستہ

دل نے دہرایا کوئی حرفِ وفا، آہستہ

تم نے کہا، ”آہستہ“

چاند نے جھک کے کہا

”اور ذرا آہستہ“

دھاکہ سے واپسی پر

ہم کہ ٹھہرے اجنبی اتنی ملاقاتوں کے بعد
پھر نہیں گئے آشنا کتنی ملاقاتوں کے بعد
کب نظر آئے گی بے داغ سبزے کی بہار
خون کے دھبے دھلیں گے کتنی برساتوں کے بعد
تھے بہت بے درد لمبے خستم دردِ عشق کے
تھیں بہت بے مہر صمیم مہربانیاں راتوں کے بعد
دل تو چاہا پر شکستِ دل نے مہلت ہی دی
کچھ گلے شکوے بھی کر لیے مناجاتوں کے بعد
ان سے جو کہنے گئے تھے فیضِ جاں صدقہ کیے
اُن کہی ہی رہ گئی وہ بات سب باتوں کے بعد

سفر نامہ

(۱)

پکینگ

یوں گماں ہوتا ہے باز وہیں مرے ساتھ کر دوڑ
اور آفاق کی مدت تک مرے تن کی حد ہے
دل مرا کوہ و دمن و دشت و چین کی حد ہے

میرے یکسے میں ہے راتوں کا سیہ فام جلال
میرے ہاتھوں میں ہے صبحوں کی عنانِ گلگوں
میری آغوش میں ملتی ہے خدائی ساری
میرے مقدور میں ہے معجزہ کن فیکوں

(۲)

سَنکیا ننگ

اَب کوئی تپیل بچے گا، نہ کوئی شاہسوار
صبح دم موت کی دادی کو روانہ ہوگا!
اب کوئی جنگ نہ ہوگی نہ کبھی رات گئے
خون کی آگ کو اشکوں سے بجھانا ہوگا

کوئی دل دھڑکے گا شب بھر نہ کسی آنکھ میں
وہم منخوس پرندے کی طرح آئے گا
سہم، خونخوار درندے کی طرح آئے گا

آب کوئی جنگ نہ ہوگی مے و ساغراؤ
خوں لٹانا نہ کبھی اشک بہانا ہوگا
ساقیا! رقص کوئی رقص صبا کی صورت
مطر با! کوئی غزل رنگِ خاکی صورت

گیت

منزلیں، منزلیں،
شوقِ دیدار کی منزلیں،
حُسنِ دلدار کی منزلیں، پیار کی منزلیں،
پیار کی بے پنہ رات کی منزلیں،
کہکشانوں کی بار رات کی منزلیں،
سر بلندی کی ہمت کی، پرواز کی
جوشِ پرواز کی منزلیں۔
راز کی منزلیں

زندگی کی کٹھن راہ کی منزلیں
ہر بندی کی ہمت کی، پرواز کی منزلیں
جوش پرواز کی منزلیں
راز کی منزلیں،
آن ملنے کے دن
پھول کھلنے کے دن
وقت کے گھور ساگر میں صبح کی
شام کی منزلیں،
چاہ کی منزلیں
آس کی، پیاس کی،
حسرت یار کی
پیار کی منزلیں،
منزلیں حُسنِ عالم کے گلزار کی
منزلیں، منزلیں

موج در موج ڈھلتی ہوئی رات کے درد کی منزلیں
چاند تاروں کے دیران کسار کی منزلیں،
اپنی دھرتی کے آباد بازار کی منزلیں
حق کے عرفان کی
نور انوار کی منزلیں،
وصل دلدار کی منزلیں
قول و اقرا کی منزلیں،
منزلیں، منزلیں

میرے ملنے والے

وہ درکھلا میرے غمکدے کا
وہ آگئے میرے ملنے والے
وہ آگئی شام، اپنی راہوں میں
فرشِ افسردگی بچپانے
وہ آگئی رات چاند تاروں کو
اپنی آزر دگی سنانے
وہ صبح آئی دمکتے نشترے
یاد کے زخم کو منانے

وہ دوپہر آتی، آستیں میں
چھپائے شعلوں کے تازیانے
یہ آئے سب میرے ملنے والے
کہ جن سے دن رات واسطہ ہے
پہ کون کب آیا، کب گیا ہے
نگاہ و دل کو خبر کہاں ہے
خیال سوئے وطن رواں ہے
سمندروں کی ایال تھا مے
ہزار وہم و گماں سنبھالے
کئی طرح کے سوال تھا مے

(۲)

نختم ہوئی بارشِ سنگ

ناگہاں آج مرے تارِ نظر سے کٹ کر
ٹکڑے ٹکڑے ہوئے آفاق پہ خورشید و قمر
اب کسی سمت اندھیرا نہ اُجالا ہوگا
بجھ گئی دل کی طرح راہِ وفا میرے بعد
دوستو! قافلہٴ درد کا اب کیا ہوگا

اب کوئی اور کرے پرورش گلشنِ عنبر
دوستو ختم ہوئی دیدہ ترکیِ شبِ عنبر
مختم کیا شورِ جنوں ختم ہوئی بارشِ سنگ
خاکِ رہ آج لیے ہے لبِ لدار کا رنگ
کوئے جانناں میں کھلا میرے لہو کا پرچم
دیکھیے دیتے ہیں کس کس کو صدا میرے بعد
ہ کون ہوتا ہے حریفِ مے مردِ سنگِ عشق
ہے مکر لبِ ساقی پر صلا میرے بعد

رَبَّا سَچِّیا

رَبَّا سَچِّیا توں تے آکھیا سی
جا اوئے بندیا جگ دَشاہ ہیں توں
ساڈیاں نَعْمَتاں تیریاں دو لَناں نہیں،
ساڈا اَنیب تے عا لیجاہ ہیں توں،
ایس لارے تے ٹور کد چھپیا اسی
رکیہ ایس نمانے تے پتیاں نہیں
کدی ساروی لئی اُور ت ساہیاں
تیرے شاہ نال جگ کیہہ کیتیاں نہیں

کتے دھوس پوئیں سرکار دی اے
کتے دھاندلی مال پٹوار دی اے
اینویں ہڈاں ج کچے جان میسری
جیویں پھاہی ج کونج کڑلا وندی اے
چنگا شاہ بنایا ای رب سائیاں
پولے کھانڈیاں وار نہ آ وندی اے

مینوں شاہی نہیں چاہیدی رب میرے
میں تے عزت د اُنکر سنگناں ہاں
مینوں تاہنگ نہیں، محللاں ماڑیاں دی
میں تے جیویں دی بُکر سنگناں ہاں

میری مَنیں تے تیریاں یں مَنّاں
تیری سوئہ جے اک وی گل موڑاں
جے ایہہ مانگ نئیں پُجیدی تیں رتبا
فیریں جاواں تے رت کوئی ہور لوڑاں

کُتے

یہ گلیوں کے آوارہ بے کار کُتے
کہ بختا گیا جن کو ذوق گدا کی
زمانے کی پھٹکار سرمایہ اُن کا
جہاں بھر کی دھتکار ان کی کمائی

نہ آرام شب کو نہ راحت سویے
غلاطت میں گھر، نالیوں میں بسترے
جو بگڑیں تو اک دوسرے سے لڑا دو
ذرا ایک روٹی کا ٹکڑا دکھا دو
یہ ہر ایک کی بھوکیں کھانے والے
یہ فاقوں سے اُکتا کے مرجانے والے

یہ مظلوم مخلوق گر سر اٹھائے
تو انسان سب سرکشی بھول جائے
یہ چاہیں تو دنیا کو اپنا بنالیں
یہ آقاؤں کی ہڈیاں تک سب جبالیں
کوئی ان کو احساسِ قلت دلا دے
کوئی ان کی سوئی ہوئی دُم ہلا دے

عشق اپنے مجرموں کو پابجولاں لے چلا

دار کی رستیوں کے گلوبند گردن میں پہنے ہوئے
گانے والے شب و روز گاتے رہے
پائلیں بیڑیوں کی بجاتے رہے
ناچنے والے دھومیں مچاتے رہے
ہم جو نہ اس صف میں تھے اور نہ اس صف میں تھے
راستے میں کھڑے اُن کو تکتے رہے
رشتک کرتے رہے

اور چپ چاپ آنسو بہاتے رہے
لوٹ کر آ کے دیکھا تو پھولوں کا رنگ
جو کبھی سُرخ تھا زرد ہی زرد ہے
اپنا پہلو ٹٹولا تو ایسا لگا

دل جہاں تھا وہاں درد ہی درد ہے
اور گلے میں کبھی طوق کا واہمہ
کبھی پاؤں میں رقص زنجیر کا
اور پھر ایک دن عشق انہیں کی طرح
زسن درگلو، پابجولاں ہمیں
اُسی قافلہ میں کشاں لے چلا

Daud Kamal was born in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. He won appreciative reviews for his many collections of verse translations and original poems from British, American, Australian, Canadian and Pakistani journals and critics. His anthology of Pakistani English poetry—*The Blue Wind*—was recently published in England, and his work was selected for broadcast by the BBC.

Kamal, who spent many years teaching, after graduating from Peshawar and Cambridge Universities, was Professor and Chairman of the Department of English at the University of Peshawar.

Daud Kamal died suddenly in New York in November 1987.

The Editor

Khalid Hasan is a Pakistani journalist who lives and works in Vienna. He has published both original and translated works, including *Versions of Truth—Urdu Stories from Pakistan* (Vikas, New Delhi 1982), *The Prisoner* (Allied, New Delhi 1983), *Scorecard* (Wajidali, Lahore 1984), *Please Give Us Back Our Onions* (Vanguard, Lahore 1985). A volume of translations of Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories is now under production.



FAIZ AHMED FAIZ

